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ABSTRACT

This report provides a performance review of a Texas school district. For the review, investigators interviewed district employees, school-board members, students, parents, business leaders, and representatives from community organizations. The review team also held public forums, conducted focus-group sessions and personal interviews, surveyed district personnel, and consulted two databases of comparative educational information. Following an introduction, the results of the research are presented in four chapters organized under the following headings: district organization and management, educational service delivery and performance measures, financial management, and operations. The results show that the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD) is a well-run district that manages the district's resources in an admirable manner. The review team found numerous "best practices," and each chapter highlights model programs, operations, and services provided by HISD administrators, teachers, and staff. Some of the district's successes include students who score above regional and state averages on standardized tests, a teacher turnover rate that is the lowest among its peer districts, an impressive use of shared facilities, and excellent relationships with the local community. Findings focus on district organization, facility construction, campus management, planning, site-based decision-making, and educational service delivery, among others. Two appendices feature community comments and survey results. (RJM)

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SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

HAMILTON

A REPORT FROM THE TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

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JOHN SHARP • COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

JULY 1998

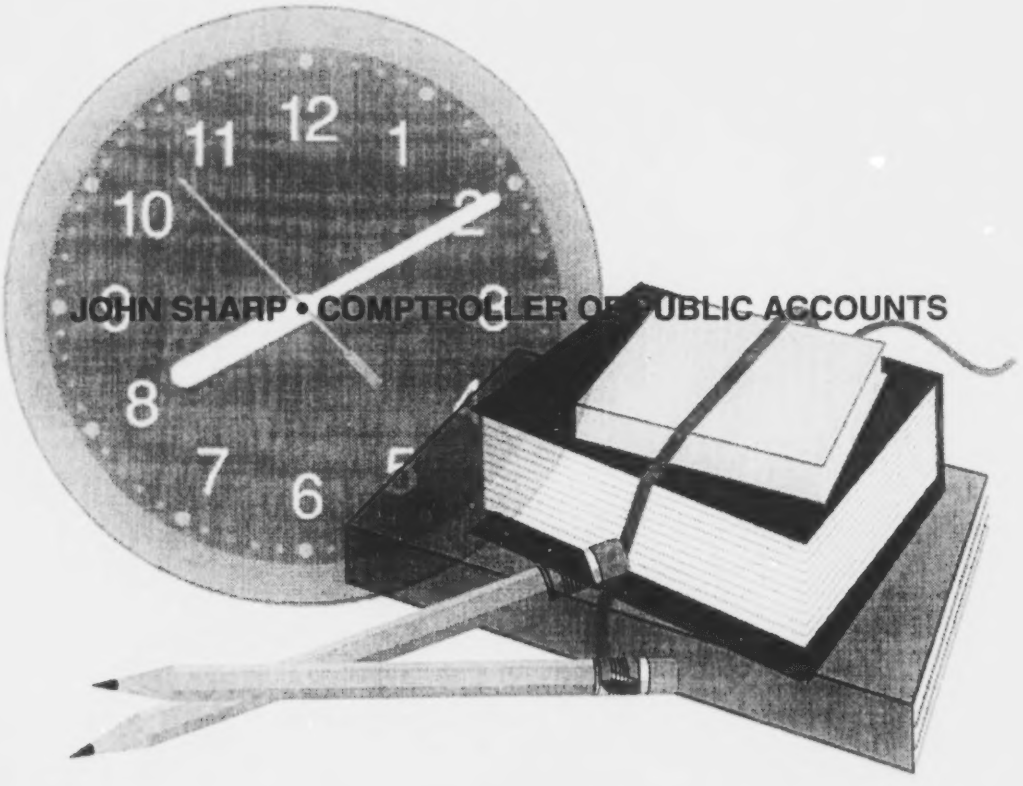
EA 030 003

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

HAMILTON

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW



July 20, 1998

The Honorable George W. Bush
The Honorable Bob Bullock
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the Texas Legislature
Commissioner Michael A. Moses, Ed.D.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to present our performance review of the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD). This review is the 30th conducted by my Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) since we began this process in 1991.

This review was unusual in that TSPR has concentrated most of its efforts over the last seven years on moderate- to large-sized districts. HISD is one of two smaller school districts that recently requested a school performance review and agreed to work with us to develop a review process tailored to their unique needs.

We found that Hamilton's students are among the state's best by many academic measures. Despite their many accomplishments, however, HISD's board and superintendent asked us to look for ways to improve their management of district resources, hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and generally to ensure that every possible tax dollar is spent in the classroom, teaching the district's children.

The report outlines 46 detailed recommendations that could save HISD $577,370 over the next five years, while reinvesting $382,416 to improve educational services and other operations. The report also identifies a number of "best practices" in HISD's operations that could and should serve as models for other Texas school districts.

We are grateful for the cooperation of HISD's administration and personnel in this study. We commend the district's board and staff and the community at large for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities offered to their children.

Sincerely,

John Sharp

JOHN SHARP
Comptroller of Public Accounts

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Hamilton Independent School District A Texas School Performance Review

The Texas Legislature created the Comptroller's Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) in 1990 to help the state's school districts, both large and small, deliver the best possible educational services to their children in the most efficient and cost-effective way. Texas is now engaged in a critical debate over how—and how much—to pay to educate its children, and all schools should be accountable to their customers for the cost and quality of the education they deliver.

Who are these customers? They are parents as well as children, and the teachers, principals, and employees who work in Texas' school districts. Ultimately, the taxpayers who support local schools also benefit from efficient and effective schools, and they deserve to know that their tax dollars are not wasted. Only then will they be willing to invest the time, energy, and resources required to ensure that our children receive the education they need to succeed.

TSPR IN HAMILTON

TSPR began its review of the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD) in February 1998. As in its previous reviews of 29 other Texas school districts, the review team went to Hamilton in response to a local call for assistance. In April 1997 and again in August 1997, the Board of Trustees and former Superintendent James O. Whitehead, along with many members of the Hamilton community, requested a performance review of HISD.

HISD presented a unique challenge for the TSPR team, which had not reviewed a district with a student population of less than 1,000 since its initial 1991 pilot project. The majority of districts reviewed by TSPR have fallen in the moderate to large range, including six of the state's largest districts: Houston, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, Ysleta in El Paso, and Corpus Christi.

TSPR's follow-up discussions with three smaller districts reviewed during its initial pilot project—the San Saba, Cherokee, and Richland Springs Independent School Districts—indicated that the review process was not sufficiently sensitive to smaller districts' needs. These districts' staff said they were overwhelmed by requests for data they did not have. Some recommendations stemming from those reviews proved unworkable because the districts simply did not have the resources to accomplish what larger districts can.

HISD and Wimberley ISD requested reviews last year and expressed their willingness to work with TSPR to modify its review process to meet the needs of smaller districts. Months in advance of the review, TSPR gave these districts a preliminary list of data the review team would need so that the district could compile basic documentation at a less demanding pace. In contracting for consulting services, the Comptroller asked potential consultants to present workplans reflecting a sensitivity to smaller districts' needs. TSPR chose a consulting firm based on its experience with smaller districts and the quality of its workplan.

With the help of WCL Enterprises, a Houston-based consulting firm, TSPR interviewed district employees, school board members, students, parents, business leaders, and representatives from community organizations to find workable recommendations to improve HISD's operations that are appropriate for a district of HISD's size.

To obtain comments from community residents, TSPR held an open forum in HISD's cafeteria on February 19, 1998 and conducted numerous focus groups that yielded valuable comments from community, civic and business leaders, and parents. The review team also collected comments from letters to the Comptroller and calls to a toll-free 1-800-BEAT-WASTE hotline, and conducted a number of one-on-one interviews. TSPR sent written surveys to teachers, principals, central and school administrators, other district employees, junior and senior high school students, and a random sample of 150 parents. Fifty-eight parents, 37 students, 49 other employees, 39 teachers, two principals, and two central and school administrators responded to the surveys. Details from the surveys, public forums, and focus groups are provided in **Appendices A** and **B.**

In addition to its extensive interviews, the review team consulted databases of comparative educational information gathered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)—the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). To make useful comparisons, the review team also asked HISD to select similar, or peer, Texas school districts. The district chose eight peer districts: Cisco ISD, Clifton ISD, De Leon ISD, Early ISD, Goldthwaite ISD, Hico ISD, Rio Vista ISD, and Valley Mills ISD. These districts have significant characteristics in common with HISD, such as enrollment and student demographics. **Exhibit 1** compares HISD and peer district enrollment for 1996-97.

Exhibit 1
HISD and Selected Peer District Enrollments
1996-97

District	Enrollment	# of Schools	Students				
			Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Anglo	African-American	Hispanic	Other
Valley Mills	470	2	36.2%	85.3%	5.3%	8.3%	1.1%
Hico	625	2	59.5%	80.8%	0.2%	19.0%	0%
Goldthwaite	639	3	32.9%	80.1%	1.3%	18.6%	0%
De Leon	778	3	50.6%	67.0%	0%	32.9%	0.1%
Rio Vista	876	3	27.9%	95.1%	0%	4.9%	0%
Hamilton	**944**	**2**	**38.3%**	**91.9%**	**0.2%**	**6.9%**	**0.9%**
Cisco	955	5	54.1%	87.1%	2.6%	9.8%	1.4%
Clifton	1,210	3	41.6%	76.5%	5.3%	18.1%	0.1%
Early	1,221	4	28.7%	89.9%	0.5%	8.1%	1.5%
RESC XII	**132,129**	**327**	**45.9%**	**58.0%**	**22.6%**	**17.6%**	**1.9%**
Texas	**3,828,975**	**6875**	**48.1%**	**45.6%**	**14.3%**	**37.4%**	**2.7%**

Source: AEIS 1996-97

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Acknowledgments

The Texas School Performance Review and WCL Enterprises wish to thank HISD's Board of Trustees; former Superintendent James O. Whitehead; Don Jones, who acted as district liaison to the review team; Shirley Lewis, secretary to the superintendent who assisted the team in scheduling interviews and collecting information; and the principals, the director of the Special Education Cooperative, teachers, and other district employees, students, and community members, who provided valuable information and assistance during TSPR's work in the district.

Hamilton ISD

HISD is located in Hamilton, Comanche, and Mills counties, 75 miles west of the city of Waco. The district serves a 500-square-mile area in central Texas. The City of Hamilton is the county seat of Hamilton County. The local economy is based on farming, ranching, and small manufacturing. The 1996 population estimate for the entire county was 8,217, an increase of 6.3 percent from the 1990 census.

In 1859, Professor J. J. Durham taught Hamilton's first school with about 40 students in attendance. Over the years, many small school districts in the Hamilton area have joined together to form larger districts. The last consolidation to affect HISD occurred in 1989, when Pottville ISD joined HISD. Today, HISD has two schools located on one campus: a combination elementary and junior high school that includes students from early childhood through grade 8, and a high school that includes grades 9-12. The district is served by TEA's Regional Education Service Center (RESC) XII in Waco. During the 1997-98 school year, HISD's 120 employees including 70 teachers and a variety of administrators and support workers served nearly 1,000 students. The district's annual operating budget is $5.3 million for 1997-98.

HISD is a growing district, with an enrollment growth of more than 21 percent over the last five years. The majority of this growth is occurring at the elementary and junior high school level, with more than 60 students added to those grades since 1994-95. HISD recently passed a bond election to build a new high school to accommodate the increase in students.

The district is a source of pride and focus for the Hamilton community. HISD is one of the state's 321 "Recognized" districts in terms of student performance. HISD's students outperform the averages for both RESC XII and the state on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests, and HISD was the only district among its peer group in which *every* 1997 graduate passed the exit-level TAAS exam. HISD students score higher than both the region and the state on college entrance exams and advanced placement exams for college credit. The community is very supportive of the school district and the district, in turn, provides the community with vital services such as facilities for continuing education opportunities.

The former superintendent, James Whitehead, had been in Hamilton for 9 years prior to accepting a position in Kemp ISD. His resignation was effective at the end of May, at which time Joe Phariss was named interim superintendent. A search for new superintendent is under way at this writing.

Texas School Performance Review: A History of Savings

For the last seven years, the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) has helped public school districts across the state ensure they spend their scarce education dollars in the classroom, where they belong, not on red tape, paperwork, and needless bureaucracy.

TSPR fields invitations from public school districts of every size and shape—large or small, rich or poor, rural or urban. The team settles in for months of detailed study at no charge to district taxpayers. TSPR's goals are to identify ways to cut costs, reduce administrative overhead, streamline operations, and improve educational services—in short, to help school districts operate more effectively and efficiently within their available resources. Most of the Comptroller's recommendations come directly from teachers, parents, students, and others who live or work in the district. TSPR has found that these hard-working folks often have known for years what would improve their schools—if only someone would ask. The Comptroller asks.

Since 1991, TSPR has offered more than 3,000 detailed ways to save taxpayers nearly $341 million in 30 public school districts throughout Texas, including Hamilton. And TSPR has accomplished this task without recommending the firing or laying off of a single classroom teacher.

Districts studied by the TSPR team to date include San Antonio, Richland Springs, San Saba, Cherokee, Lubbock, Victoria, West Orange/Cove Consolidated, Lake Travis, Dallas, Austin, Calhoun County, Midland, Paris, San Marcos Consolidated, Brownsville, Longview, San Angelo, Beaumont, Waco, United in Laredo, Tyler, Houston, Texarkana, Spring, Corpus Christi, Socorro, Ysleta, Port Arthur, and Wimberley. Reviews of the El Paso, Mount Pleasant, and Comal districts are anticipated to begin early in the 1998-99 school year.

In addition, TSPR conducts follow-up reviews in districts that have had at least one year to implement its recommendations. These subsequent reviews indicate that 89 percent of TSPR's combined proposals have been acted upon, saving local taxpayers more than $80 million during their first years of implementation, with much more in additional savings expected in the following years.

TSPR's work is not a financial audit in the traditional sense. Its purpose is not to uncover financial wrongdoing or potentially criminal activities. Instead, each review tries to show the participating district how it might accomplish more within its existing budget.

For detailed information on any of TSPR's previous reviews, call the Texas School Performance Review toll-free at 1-800-232-8927.

Summary Results

Overall, the review team found HISD is a very well-run district that is doing a commendable job of managing the district's resources. The team found many exemplary practices that could be repeated in other school districts across Texas. Charged with finding ways to make a good district better, the team developed 46 recommendations during a five-month review, which ended in July 1998.

The review identified total savings of $577,370 that could be realized by the fiscal 2002-03. TSPR's recommendations also identified investment opportunities of $92,380 in fiscal 1998-99 and total investment opportunities of $382,416 through fiscal 2003. Cumulative net savings from all

recommendations (savings less recommended investments) is projected to reach almost $194,954 by fiscal 2003.

Implementing recommendations from this report could produce annual gross savings of $114,774, or 5.3 percent of HISD's administrative budget (total budget minus instructional costs such as teacher salaries and classroom supplies), or 2.2 percent of HISD's total annual operating budget. The savings opportunities identified in the report are conservative and should be considered the minimum that can be realized if all of TSPR's recommendations are implemented.

The total estimated savings and costs associated with TSPR's recommendations are listed at the end of this summary. While many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct financial impact on the district, they nevertheless could produce important improved policies and practices.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" in HISD. Commendations in each chapter highlight model programs, operations, and services provided by HISD administrators, teachers, and staff. Other school districts throughout the state are encouraged to examine these programs and services to see if they may be adapted to meet their own local needs. Notable examples of HISD's best practices include the following:

- HISD's students score higher on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests, national college entrance exams, and advanced placement tests than the regional or state averages.

- Teacher turnover rates in the Hamilton ISD were only 2.6 percent in 1996-97, the lowest of its peer districts and well below the regional average of 14.1 percent and the state average of 12.6 percent. Teachers told the review team they appreciate the high level of community involvement and the advantages of teaching in a small district.

- HISD's use of shared facilities has greatly reduced staffing costs. Because of its shared facilities, only one librarian, one nurse, and one technology aide are needed for all levels, and teachers at the elementary level also teach one or more units at the junior high level, lessening the need for full-time teachers in both areas.

- HISD has an excellent relationship with the local community based on regular communication though the local newspaper, radio station, and a new Internet site. The teamwork exhibited between the district and community in the passage of the bond issue is an excellent example of involving the community in critical decision-making processes.

- Central Texas College (CTC) offers a number of off-campus courses at HISD. CTC has participated with HISD in the purchase of jointly used computers and employs HISD staff and teachers to teach courses. This collaboration benefits the district and makes higher education available and affordable to the citizens of Hamilton.

- HISD's extracurricular programs provide students a wide array of activities. In addition to producing many championship and awards, the program teaches teamwork and instills pride in the students and the schools. The band program, which has become a model for other districts in the state, encourages students that do not otherwise participate in school-related activities to be a part of an award-winning program.

- HISD's detailed five-year technology plan and the aggressive manner in which grants and other funding are sought provides a model of planning, implementation, and resourcefulness for other districts in the state.

- For 1997-98, HISD rebid its employee health insurance coverage. The result was improved benefits and a reduced rate for HISD employees. Participation increased from 30 employees in 1996-97 to more than 90 under the new plan.

- The issuance of $5.5 million in bonds for the construction of the new high school was timed to coincide with a new federal exemption that will allow HISD to earn additional interest on the bond proceeds until the funds are actually used for construction.

Chapter by Chapter: Key Findings and Recommendations

District Organization and Management: As the Board of Trustees begins the search for a superintendent, clear expectations must be developed and used both for hiring and evaluation. Once the superintendent is in place, the board and superintendent should establish goals and objectives for the district that can be quantified and against which progress can be measured.

Facility Construction: One of the most critical activities that the district will be engaged in during the coming year is the construction of a new high school. A project management plan that assigns responsibilities to district and contract employees, and clarifies the implications that this construction will have on existing programs, is vital if the facility is to be constructed in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Campus Management: The majority of HISD's student body is served in the elementary/junior high school and the principal of that campus is responsible not only for all administrative and instructional programs on that campus, but also for numerous special education functions. Adding an assistant principal to this campus would provide an additional level of instructional leadership and some relief to the existing principal.

Planning: The board has established a list of goals, but none contain a long-range view of what the district wishes to accomplish in the future. By establishing a five-year plan that ties annual district priorities to the budget, the district could better focus on achieving these priorities and communicating quantifiable results to the community.

Site-based decision-making: The relative authority of the site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees, principals, and board is not clearly understood. Clearly defining these levels of authority and communicating them to all HISD staff and parents would improve the effectiveness of SBDM at all levels.

Educational Service Delivery: Teachers expressed concern about the consistency and continuity of curriculum from grade to grade, even though a curricular review was completed last year. According the these teachers, gaps continue to exist in key subjects such as science. Prior to the 1999-2000 school year, HISD should evaluate all its curriculum and make any needed modifications.

Instructional Technology: HISD has no core curriculum in the area of technology. Because technology is critical for any student in today's world, it is vital that HISD, as part of the overall curriculum review, develop curricula for technology at all grade levels.

Financial Management: HISD does not track expenditures by program area. Consequently, is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness or efficiency of various programs, and program directors find it difficult to obtain the level of detail needed to better manage the programs. The optional program codes currently available in the district's accounting system could provide the district with the level of detail needed for crucial decision-making activities.

Special Education: The Special Education Cooperative does not bill Medicaid for services provided to special education students under the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program. A preliminary estimate shows that HISD could be eligible for nearly $40,000 annually in reimbursements from SHARS for services already provided to special education students.

Transportation: Unlike many districts reviewed by TSPR, the age and condition of HISD's buses indicates that the district is replacing too many buses. Using a 12-year replacement cycle, HISD could sell four older buses today and defer purchasing new buses for the next five years, for a five-year savings of $203,500.

Food Service: Increasing participation in the breakfast and lunch programs in HISD should be a priority. The district is losing valuable revenues both from a productivity standpoint and from federal dollars, since the identification of children for the free- or reduced-price meal program is a key criterion for Compensatory Education funding for services to students at risk of failure. An automated tracking system also would improve the productivity of workers and protect the identity of students participating in the free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs.

Safety and Security: HISD enjoys schools that are virtually free of the crime and violence experienced in larger urban districts. Expanding the role of the SBDM committees to include campus security and developing an appropriate response to issues raised by parents and the community could ensure the continuation of a safe and secure environment for HISD students and staff.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many of TSPR's recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that HISD could use to meet its students' needs. The savings identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums.

As shown in **Exhibit 2**, full implementation of the recommendations in this report could produce net savings of $77,030 over the next two years. HISD could achieve total net savings of almost $194,954 by 2002-2003 if all of TSPR's recommendations are implemented.

Exhibit 2
Summary of Net Savings

Year		Total
1998-99	Initial Annual Net Savings	**$34,765**
1999-00	Additional Annual Net Savings	**$42,265**
2000-01	Additional Annual Net Savings	**$42,265**
2001-02	Additional Annual Net Savings	**$42,265**
2002-03	Additional Annual Net Savings	**$42,265**
	One Time (Costs) Savings	**($8,871)**
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 1999-2003		**$194,954**

Detailed implementation strategies, timelines, and estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights a series of actions needed to achieve results. Some recommendations should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two, and some over several years.

TSPR recommends the HISD board ask district administrators to review these recommendations, develop an implementation plan, and monitor subsequent progress. As always, TSPR is available to help implement its proposals.

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Exhibit 3
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

		Annual (Costs) or Savings/Revenue					Total 5-year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		1998- 1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003		
Chapter 1: District Organization and Management								
1	Establish clear and measurable expectations to hire and evaluate the superintendent. (p. 26)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
2	Establish an annual calendar of key meeting dates and subjects and consolidate and shorten board meetings. (p. 28)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
3	Meet with RESC XII representatives to design board training that meets the needs of HISD board members. (p. 29)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
4	Establish a five-year plan that ties annual district priorities to the budget. (p. 31)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
5	Develop and implement a set of management guidelines or standard operating procedures for key policy areas, and train all staff in their application. (p. 36)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
6	Include all program managers in the review of PEIMS data prior to submission to the Texas Education Agency. (p. 37)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
7	Clearly define the levels of authority associated with each level in the SBDM process, and communicate this new policy to all HISD staff. (p. 39)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
8	Review the TARS research and its applicability to HISD and develop staffing and funding allocations in the budget process that are reviewed annually. (p. 44)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
9	Develop an approach for open, two-way communication with the community on a regular, planned basis. (p. 51)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
10	Develop a formal program for senior citizens. (p. 52)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
	Totals-Chapter 1	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Chapter 2: Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures								
11	Add a full-time assistant principal at the elementary/junior high school level. (p. 80)	($40.250)	($40.250)	($40.250)	($40.250)	($40.250)	($201.250)	
12	Develop structured staff development offerings that directly support district goals and objectives. (p. 82)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	

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		Annual (Costs) or Savings/Revenue					Total 5-year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003		
13	Evaluate the curriculum during the summer and recommend modifications to the superintendent prior to the 1999-2000 school year. (p. 85)	($15,000)	($7,500)	($7,500)	($7,500)	($7,500)	($45,000)	($1,400)
14	Link the athletic program directly to HISD goals and objectives and report regularly on progress made toward meeting these goals. (p. 88)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
15	Link the UIL academic program directly to HISD goals and objectives and report regularly on progress made toward meeting these goals. (p. 89)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
16	Develop a K-12 technology curriculum. (p. 93)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
17	Establish the technology coordinator position as a full-time administrative position. (p. 94)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
18	Review the instructional settings of each special education student to determine the least restrictive environment for the delivery of services and arrange for the most effective use of the inclusion teacher and aid. (p. 98)	$9,760	$9,760	$9,760	$9,760	$9,760	$48,800	
19	Develop special education staffing guidelines for member districts. (p. 100)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
20	Bill Medicaid for SHARS services provided to Medicaid-eligible special education students and contract for claims processing. (p. 102)	$39,566	$39,566	$39,566	$39,566	$39,566	$197,830	
21	Evaluate the clustering of all gifted and talented students at a grade level in the same regular classroom and including transfer students and existing talent pool students in the same classroom. (p. 104)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
22	Explore opportunities to expand the CATE program through cooperative arrangements with CTC to include CORD, area districts, and local businesses. (p. 108)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
	Total-Chapter 2	($5,924)	$1,576	$1,576	$1,576	$1,576	$380	($1,400)

		Annual (Costs) or Savings/Revenue					Total 5-year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		1998- 1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003		
Chapter 3: Financial Management								
23	Establish accounting reports that detail budgets and expenditures by key program areas. (p. 118)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
24	Require the auditors to provide adjusting entries at the time they complete their site-work. (p. 119)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
25	Reduce the number of in-house checks by preparing computer checks on a weekly basis. (p. 121)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
26	Establish a formal budget calendar. (p. 124)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
27	Set the budget for the entire school year and eliminate dual codes for purchases. (p. 125)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
28	Use all the payroll budgeting capabilities of the RSCCC system. (p. 126)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
29	Cross-train the office aide and at least one other person to perform all payroll functions. (p. 127)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
30	Enter all employee leave information into the RSCCC payroll module and update on a monthly basis. (p. 128)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
31	Develop a comprehensive purchasing manual. (p. 131)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
32	Prepare lists of specific items for which HISD wants to receive bids and prepare a catalog with the selected vendor for use by district personnel. (p. 133)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
33	Forecast cash flow needs on a regular basis and select investments in accordance with cash needs. (p. 138)	$6.000	$6.000	$6.000	$6.000	$6.000	$30.000	
34	Use the upgraded fixed asset system to take advantage of the direct link between purchase orders and fixed assets. (p. 140)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
	Totals-Chapter 3	$6.000	$6.000	$6.000	$6.000	$6.000	$30.000	$0
Chapter 4: Operations								
35	Prepare a project management plan that assigns responsibilities to HISD and contract personnel to govern development of the new facility. (p. 147)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
36	Construct a model of the new high school and identify the most effective use of personnel, facilities, and services. (p. 149)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	

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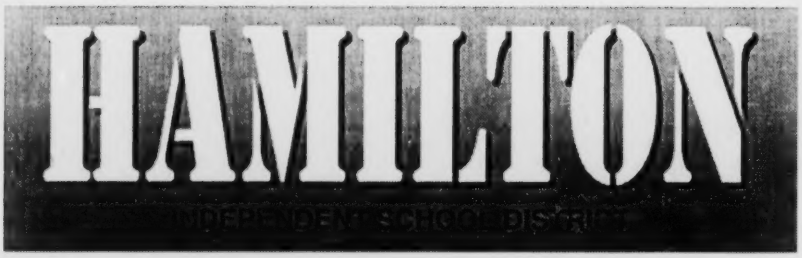
		Annual (Costs) or Savings/Revenue					Total 5-year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		1998- 1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003		
37	Redesign custodial cleaning areas of responsibility using industry standards, hire an additional custodian, and shift some custodial work schedules to hours when school is not in session. (p. 154)	($17,334)	($17,334)	($17,334)	($17,334)	($17,334)	($86,670)	
38	Establish a more formal recycling program for all eligible items. (p. 160)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
39	Increase participation in the breakfast and lunch programs. (p. 162)	$19,448	$19,448	$19,448	$19,448	$19,448	$97,240	
40	Automate the system of recording meal participation. (p. 163)	($1,425)	($1,425)	($1,425)	($1,425)	($1,425)	($7,125)	($9,971)
41	Transfer responsibility for collecting meal payments and prepayments to either the school office, the business office, or the superintendent's office. (p. 164)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
42	Expand the role of the site-based decision-making committees to include campus safety. (p. 166)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
43	Monitor access in and out of the school and restrict access during the day to one primary entrance that is clearly marked. (p. 167)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
44	Establish a two-way communication system in classrooms. (p. 168)	($6,000)	($6,000)	($6,000)	($6,000)	($6,000)	($30,000)	($1,000)
45	Update the discipline management plan at both schools and communicate the key elements of the plan to parents and teachers. (p. 170)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
46	Establish a regular bus procurement program to replace buses every 12 years. (p. 176)	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	$200,000	$3,500
	Totals-Chapter 4	$34,689	$34,689	$34,689	$34,689	$34,689	$173,445	($7,471)
TOTAL SAVINGS		**$114,774**	**$114,774**	**$114,774**	**$114,774**	**$114,774**	**$573,870**	**$3,500**
TOTAL (COSTS)		**($80,009)**	**($72,509)**	**($72,509)**	**($72,509)**	**($72,509)**	**($370,045)**	**($12,371)**
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)		**$34,765**	**$42,265**	**$42,265**	**$42,265**	**$42,265**	**$203,825**	**($8,871)**

5 Year Gross Savings	**$577,370**
5 Year Costs	**($382,416)**
Grand Total	**$194,954**



DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines the organization and management of the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD) in five parts:

A. Board and Governance
B. Planning
C. District Management
D. Site-Based Decision-Making
E. Personnel Management and Staffing
F. Community Involvement

BACKGROUND

In Texas, a school district's organization begins with an elected board of trustees. School board members are elected by district residents either at-large, districtwide, or from single-member districts that cover only a portion of the school district.

School districts in Texas are predominantly "independent" school districts. An independent school district board sets policies, selects key management, establishes property tax rates, and approves staffing levels, pay rates, and the annual budget. It also determines facility needs and calls bond elections as necessary to support those needs.

A superintendent hired by the board serves as chief executive officer for a contractual period of time subject to renewal, nonrenewal, or dismissal. District superintendents are responsible for determining the number of staff needed to accomplish district missions and objectives, preparing and recommending an annual budget, and supervising day-to-day operations.

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD is located in Hamilton, Comanche, and Mills counties approximately 75 miles west of the city of Waco. HISD serves a 500 square mile area in central Texas. The City of Hamilton is the county seat of Hamilton County. The county economy is based on farming, ranching, and small manufacturing. The 1996 population estimate for the entire county was 8,217, an increase of 6.3 percent from the 1990 census.

HISD has two schools which are located on one campus: a combination elementary and junior high school that includes students from early childhood through grade 8, and a high school that includes grades 9 through 12. Erollment for 1996-97 totaled 944 students. The district is served by the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Regional Education Service Center XII (RESC XII) in Waco. Over the years, numerous consolidations of districts within Hamilton County have occurred. The last consolidation affecting HISD occurred in 1989, when Pottsville ISD became a part of HISD.

For this review, HISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes based upon certain similarities in size, location, enrollment, and property value. Those districts are Cisco, Clifton, De Leon, Early,

Goldthwaite, Hico, Rio Vista, and Valley Mills. Their enrollment and accreditation status are presented in **Exhibit 1-1**.

Exhibit 1-1
HISD and Peer District Enrollments and Accreditation Status
1996-97

District	Enrollment	Accreditation Status
Early	1,221	Recognized
Clifton	1,210	Academically Acceptable
Cisco	955	Recognized
Hamilton	**944**	**Recognized**
Rio Vista	876	Recognized
De Leon	778	Academically Acceptable
Goldthwaite	639	Academically Acceptable
Hico	625	Recognized
Valley Mills	470	Academically Acceptable

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

HISD is largely made up of undeveloped land; undeveloped land makes up 42 percent of its total property value compared to only 7.6 percent on average for the state. HISD has 27.2 percent of its property value in business or commercial property values versus 41.2 percent for the state (**Exhibit 1-2**).

Exhibit 1-2
HISD and State Property Value by Category
as a Percentage of Total Property Value
1997-98

Property Category	Hamilton	State
Business	27.2%	41.2%
Residential	30.1%	46.7%
Land	42.0%	7.6%
Oil and gas	0.0%	4.0%
Other	0.7%	0.5%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Comptroller of Public Accounts, July 1998.

Compared to its peer districts, HISD's property value from open, undeveloped land is the third highest compared to its peer districts (**Exhibit 1-3**).

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Exhibit 1-3
HISD and Peer Districts State Property Value by Category
as a Percentage of Total Property Value
1997-98

District	Land	Business	Residential	Oil and Gas	Other	Total
Hico	51.8%	21.5%	25.9%	0.0%	0.8%	100%
Rio Vista	49.0%	13.9%	35.3%	0.0%	1.8%	100%
Hamilton	**42.0%**	**27.2%**	**30.1%**	**0.0%**	**0.5%**	**100%**
Goldthwaite	38.9%	26.9%	33.7%	0.0%	0.5%	100%
De Leon	35.6%	30.6%	31.0%	2.2%	0.5%	100%
Valley Mills	33.0%	39.1%	27.4%	0.0%	0.5%	100%
Early	22.1%	33.0%	43.7%	0.1%	1.1%	100%
Cisco	20.9%	41.9%	29.2%	7.5%	0.4%	100%
Clifton	21.2%	30.8%	47.7%	0.0%	0.3%	100%

Source: Comptroller of Public Accounts, July 1998.

Exhibit 1-4 shows that HISD's tax rate has not changed over the past three years.

Exhibit 1-4
HISD Tax Rates and Assessed Property Value
1995-96 through 1997-98

Category	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percentage Change over the Period
Maintenance and operations tax rate	$1.05	$1.05	$1.05	0%
Interest and sinking fund	$0	$0	$0	0%
Total tax rate	$1.05	$1.05	$1.05	0%
Total assessed property value	$129,484,223	$122,655,836	*	*
Value per student	$139,681	$129,932	*	*

Source: Comptroller of Public Accounts, July 1998.
** data not yet available for 1997-98*

Compared to its peer districts, HISD has the lowest property tax rate (**Exhibit 1-5**). The rate is also well below the average tax rate for the region and the state. According to HISD's business manager, the recent $5.5 million bond package is expected to raise the tax rate by 19 cents beginning in 1998-99.

Exhibit 1-5
HISD Adopted Tax Rate and Taxable Property Value
Compared to Peer Districts
1996-97

District	Taxable Property Value/Pupil	Adopted Tax Rate
Rio Vista	$55,008	$1.807
Early	$68,032	$1.612
RESC XII	**$113,336**	**$1.500**
Texas	**$172,673**	**$1.430**
Hico	$80,298	$1.350
Clifton	$137,004	$1.323
Valley Mills	$171,664	$1.312
Cisco	$87,381	$1.300
De Leon	$119,463	$1.140
Goldthwaite	$93,237	$1.060
Hamilton	**$129,932**	**$1.050**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

HISD had budgeted revenues of $5,221,751 in 1996-97 the last full year for which audited financial statements are available. Total operating expenditures for the same year were $5,269,152. Compared to its peer districts, HISD had the second lowest instructional expenditures per pupil. **Exhibit 1-6** compares HISD's receipt and use of funds to its selected peer districts.

Exhibit 1-6
HISD Budgeted Revenues and Expenditures Compared to Peer Districts
1996-97

District	Total Revenue (millions)	Revenue/ Pupil	Total Operating Expenditures (millions)	Total Operating Expenditures/ Pupil	Total Instructional Expenditures (millions)	Instructional Expenditures/ Pupil
Early	$6.73	$5,513	$6.11	$5,004	$3.59	$2,944
Clifton	$6.28	$5,188	$5.55	$4,588	$4.35	$3,602
Rio Vista	$5.49	$6,265	$4.94	$5,642	$2.81	$3,213
Cisco	$5.23	$5,475	$4.64	$4,858	$2.80	$2,929
Hamilton	**$5.22**	**$5,532**	**$4.34**	**$4,603**	**$2.74**	**$2,905**
De Leon	$4.01	$5,155	$3.76	$4,832	$2.35	$3,017
Goldthwaite	$3.80	$5,949	$3.70	$5,789	$2.34	$3,664
Hico	$3.50	$5,598	$2.97	$4,752	$1.66	$2,656
Valley Mills	$2.76	$5,867	$2.72	$5,791	$1.60	$3,399

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

The district receives revenue from local, state, and federal sources. The average percentage of total revenues for Texas school districts is 52.0 percent from local revenue, 44.5 percent from state sources, and 3.6 percent from federal sources. HISD and its peer districts all have a lower percentage of local revenue and a higher percentage of state revenue than the averages noted above (**Exhibit 1-7**).

Exhibit 1-7
HISD, State, RESC XII, and Peer District Revenue Sources
as a Percentage of Total Revenues
1996-97

District	Local/Other Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue
Rio Vista	20.6%	77.2%	2.1%
Hico	22.5%	74.4%	3.0%
Early	23.9%	74.2%	2.0%
Cisco	25.9%	70.0%	4.1%
Goldthwaite	26.0%	71.7%	2.2%
Hamilton	**30.2%**	**68.0%**	**1.8%**
De Leon	32.4%	63.8%	3.8%
RESC XII	**34.8%**	**58.2%**	**7.0%**
Clifton	40.3%	56.8%	2.8%
Valley Mills	42.8%	54.9%	2.3%
State	**52.0%**	**44.5%**	**3.6%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

HISD spends 52.0 percent of its revenue on instruction which is among the lowest compared to its peer districts and slightly below the regional average of 53.7 percent and the state average of 53 percent (**Exhibit 1-8**).

Exhibit 1-8
HISD and Peer District Expenditures by Type and Percentage
1996-97

District	Instruction and Instructional Leadership	School Leadership	Central Administration	Other Operating	Non-Operating
Clifton	71.8%	0.0%	3.9%	15.7%	8.6%
De Leon	61.0%	5.7%	5.1%	25.8%	2.4%
Cisco	57.3%	4.1%	4.3%	29.4%	4.9%
Early	53.9%	6.0%	2.8%	25.8%	11.5%
RESC XII	**53.7%**	**5.3%**	**4.0%**	**28.5%**	**8.5%**
Hico	53.6%	5.2%	6.8%	30.3%	4.1%
Texas	**53.0%**	**5.2%**	**3.5%**	**27.9%**	**10.4%**
Hamilton	**52.0%**	**3.5%**	**5.1%**	**21.9%**	**17.5%**
Goldthwaite	51.7%	4.2%	4.8%	21.0%	18.3%
Valley Mills	51.6%	6.8%	7.3%	22.3%	12.0%
Rio Vista	51.6%	5.3%	4.9%	28.8%	9.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Compared to its peer districts, HISD has the lowest-paid central administrators (**Exhibit 1-9**).

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Exhibit 1-9
HISD and Peer District Central Administrative Salaries
1996-97

District	Average Salary for Central Administrators
Rio Vista	$77,001
Valley Mills	$70,500
Goldthwaite	$61,845
Hico	$61,000
Cisco	$60,595
Texas	**$60,278**
RESC XII	**$57,268**
De Leon	$56,600
Early	$53,612
Clifton	$52,698
Hamilton	**$52,192**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

School administrative salaries for HISD and its peer districts are included in **Exhibit 1-10**. HISD is right in the middle in this category, and it is below the average for the region and the state.

Exhibit 1-10
HISD and Peer District School Administrative Salaries
1996-97

District	Average Salary for School Administrators
Rio Vista	$52,553
Texas	**$50,713**
Clifton	$50,049
Cisco	$48,619
RESC XII	**$47,379**
De Leon	$47,137
Hamilton	**$47,045**
Goldthwaite	$47,039
Valley Mills	$46,455
Early	$45,966
Hico	$44,914

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Among teachers, HISD again ranks near the bottom in average salaries, exceeding only one peer district and trailing the regional and state averages (**Exhibit 1-11**). HISD's policy has been to pay teachers $1,000 above the state minimum salary

Exhibit 1-11
HISD and Peer District Average Teacher Salaries
1996-97

District	Average Salary for Teachers
Goldthwaite	$32,477
Texas	**$32,426**
Valley Mills	$31,178
Early	$30,750
De Leon	$30,613
RESC XII	**$30,409**
Clifton	$30,276
Hico	$30,016
Cisco	$29,584
Hamilton	**$29,489**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

HISD's base teacher salaries have increased at a faster rate over the past three years than either the regional or state base teacher salaries (**Exhibit 1-12**).

Exhibit 1-12
HISD, RESC XII, and State Teacher Average Base Salary
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Change over the Period
Hamilton	$25,948	$27,857	$29,489	13.6%
RESC XII	$26,968	$28,925	$30,409	12.8%
State	$29,452	$31,400	$32,426	10.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

The salaries of HISD's least and most experienced teachers also have increased by the largest percentages over the last three years. Overall, increases for teachers in all categories of experience in HISD have exceeded the state average (**Exhibit 1-13**).

Exhibit 1-13
HISD and State Teacher Average Base Salary by Years of Experience
1994-95 through 1996-97

Years of Experience	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	HISD Percentage Change over the Period	State Percentage Change over the Period
Beginning teachers	$18,000	N/A	$21,105	17.3%	9.4%
1-5 years	$20,161	$20,846	$21,893	8.6%	6.3%
6-10 years	$25,156	$26,753	$28,306	12.5%	6.6%
11-20 years	$27,515	$30,568	$32,858	19.4%	12.0%
More than 20 years	$29,462	$32,834	$35,483	20.4%	12.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

While HISD teacher salaries appear competitive with its peer districts at the beginning teacher level, as the level of teacher experience increases, HISD's salary competitiveness decreases (**Exhibit 1-14**).

Exhibit 1-14
HISD and Peer District Average Teacher Base Salary by Years of Experience
1996-97

Years of Experience	Hamilton	Cisco	Clifton	De Leon	Early	Goldth-waite	Hico	Rio Vista	Valley Mills
Beginning teachers	**$21,105**	$19,951	$21,824	$18,524	$20,149	$22,639	$20,949	$22,085	$21,448
1-5 years	**$21,893**	$22,265	$23,381	$22,243	$22,826	$24,546	$23,908	$23,901	$25,370
6-10 years	**$28,306**	$28,833	$29,671	$27,531	$27,667	$30,887	$27,988	$28,770	$29,315
11-20 years	**$32,858**	$33,206	$35,239	$34,538	$34,492	$37,105	$34,819	$36,186	$34,390
More than 20 years	**$35,483**	$37,440	$39,271	$36,441	$37,213	$38,960	$35,724	$40,700	$36,510

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Yet, teacher turnover for HISD was only 2.6 percent in 1996-97 which is the lowest compared to its peer districts and well below the regional and state averages (**Exhibit 1-15**). Based upon interviews with teachers and survey responses, teachers appreciate the high level of community involvement and the advantages of teaching in a small district, such as smaller class sizes.

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Exhibit 1-15
HISD and Peer District Teacher Turnover
1996-97

District	Teacher Turnover Percentage
Hamilton	**2.6%**
De Leon	6.4%
Goldthwaite	7.2%
Cisco	7.4%
Texas	**12.6%**
Hico	13.1%
Early	14.0%
RESC XII	**14.1%**
Rio Vista	14.7%
Clifton	17.6%
Valley Mills	17.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Teachers in HISD average 13.1 years of experience, including 6.9 years of experience with HISD. Compared to its peer districts, HISD teachers are among the most experienced, with almost one-half of the total experience outside of HISD (**Exhibit 1-16**).

Exhibit 1-16
HISD and Peer District Teacher Average Years of Experience
1996-97

District	Teacher Experience - Total Years	Teacher Experience - Years Within the District
De Leon	14.6	9.2
Early	14.0	7.5
Hamilton	**13.1**	**6.9**
Goldthwaite	12.8	6.6
Valley Mills	12.0	6.3
Cisco	11.7	7.8
Texas	**11.7**	**8.0**
Hico	11.6	6.9
RESC XII	**11.5**	**7.1**
Clifton	11.4	5.8
Rio Vista	8.3	4.0

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

A. BOARD AND GOVERNANCE

BACKGROUND

Each Texas independent school district is governed by an elected board of trustees which derives its legal status from the Texas Constitution and the Texas Legislature. The board must function in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, court decisions, applicable regulations pursuant to state and federal law.

Under Section 11.151 of the Texas Education Code, each board has specific statutory powers and duties, including:

- Govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district;
- Adopt such rules, regulations, and bylaws as the board may deem proper;
- Approve a district-developed plan for site based decision-making and provide for its implementation;
- Levy and collect taxes and issue bonds;
- Select tax officials, as appropriate to the district's need;
- Prepare, adopt, and file a budget for the next succeeding fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- Have district fiscal accounts audited at district expense by a Texas certified or public accountant holding a permit from the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy following the close of each fiscal year;
- Publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including campus performance objectives and the progress of each campus toward achieving those objectives;
- Receive bequests and donations or other money coming legally into its hands in the name of the district;
- Select a depository for district funds;
- Order elections, canvass the returns, declare results, and issue certificates of election as required by law;
- Dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the district;
- Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district; and
- Hold all powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to the Texas Education Agency or the State Board of Education.

CURRENT SITUATION

The HISD board consists of seven members elected at-large for three-year terms. Terms are staggered so that no more than three board positions are up for election at one time. **Exhibit 1-17** is a list of board members at the time the review was initiated.

Exhibit 1-17
HISD Board of Trustees
1997-98

Name	Title	Term Expires	Years of Experience	Occupation
T.P. Medlock	President	1998	9	Owner of propane gas company
Herman Lanmon, Jr.	Vice President	1998	3	Sales representative
Dennis Ensor	Secretary	1999	2	Real estate
Dewayne Clover	Member	1999	2	Licensed vocational nurse
LaVerne Funderburk	Member	2000	4	Certified public accountant
Paul Odom	Member	2000	1	Owner of masonry business
Connie White	Member	1999	5	Attorney

Source: HISD.

In the board elections in May 1998, T. P. Medlock was re-elected and Herman Lanmon was replaced by Nancy Diaz, a rancher. Medlock was re-elected as board president, Funderburk was elected vice president, and Ensor was re-elected as secretary.

FINDING

Board members told the review team that while each individual member and the board as a whole understand their role, the board has been "creeping" into administration. The board members felt they were slowly making more and more decisions that related to the day-to-day responsibilities of running the district. Among the key areas of recent concern by board members has been planning, communication, and overall availability of management information, personnel management, and consistent application of discipline.

Following the resignation of the former superintendent, the board members collectively indicated that they were looking for an aggressive, dynamic superintendent who would analyze the district's needs and make the recommendations necessary to move the district to greater levels of achievement. While the board members generally agreed on the basic skills and personality traits of a new superintendent, they varied widely on the key issues and expected performance measures associated with the superintendent position. In the absence of written performance expectations and a set of written, district priority objectives, a new superintendent will have a difficult time succeeding.

Other districts with which the review team is familiar establish evaluation criteria based on the annual and long-term objectives of the district. For example, boards may establish an objective for increasing student achievement. In evaluating superintendent candidates, they can assess each candidate on the individual's past ability to raise student performance from one year to another. Another objective might be to increase the financial position of the district. The board can evaluate how candidates have previously managed the tax rate, increased fund balance, funded programs, and managed costs.

Recommendation 1:

Establish clear and measurable expectations to hire and evaluate the superintendent.

Since the board is in the process of hiring a new superintendent, these expectations should be in place prior to the interviews and final selection. In selecting a new superintendent, key performance areas should be used to evaluate the strengths and capabilities of candidates to meet HISD's needs. Once the superintendent is in place, the board and superintendent should establish goals and objectives that can be quantified and against which progress can be measured.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board meets to determine criteria to evaluate the superintendent.	July 1998
2.	The board adopts a set of criteria.	July 1998
3.	The board uses criteria to evaluate candidates and select a new superintendent.	July - August 1998
3.	The board establishes key milestones, monitors progress, and holds periodic meetings, as necessary, with the superintendent.	Ongoing
4.	The board conducts the annual review of the superintendent using the criteria it has established.	February 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The board is scheduled to meet once per month on the third Monday of the month. The superintendent prepares the agenda and the information packages to support it. The support information is typically technical information (e.g., computer printouts of financial information), copies of letters or documents from other sources (e.g., architect, contractor, auditor), or articles from other sources of information. The information evaluated by the review team seldom included detailed recommendations or analysis of available alternatives.

During the period from September 1995 through January 1998, a period of 29 months, the board held 29 regular meetings and 36 special meetings (**Exhibit 1-18**). Since the district recently passed a bond issue, seven of the special meetings of the board during this time were held in concert with a citizens' facility steering committee for the sole purpose of hearing an update to plans from the district's architect.

Exhibit 1-18
Number of HISD Board Meetings
1995-96 through 1997-98

Year	Number of Regular Board Meetings	Number of Special Board Meetings
1995-96	12	6
1996-97	12	19
1997-98 (through January)	5	11
Total	**29**	**36**

Source: HISD Board meeting minutes, 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Not only has the board met frequently, but the meetings have been very long. **Exhibit 1-19** provides the average length of regular and special board meetings held during this period.

Exhibit 1-19
Average Length of HISD Board Meetings
1995-96 through 1997-98

Year	Average Length of Regular Board Meetings	Average Length of Special Board Meetings	Total Time of Monthly Board Meetings
1995-96	3.70 hours	2.54 hours	6.24 hours
1996-97	3.73 hours	2.61 hours	6.34 hours
1997-98 (through January)	3.81 hours	1.69 hours	5.50 hours

Source: HISD Board meeting minutes, 1995-96 through 1997-98.

During interviews conducted by the review team with board members, frequent comments were made regarding the number and length of board meetings, including the following:

- "The frequent and lengthy board meetings are due to the [former] superintendent not taking the ball and running with it. He does not bring recommendations to the board, and we end up spending excessive time discussing alternatives in the board meeting."
- "The meetings last too long because the [former] superintendent won't lead."
- "Since I've been on the board, we've never had a month in which we just had one meeting."
- "[The former] superintendent does not recommend action, so we spend most of our time discussing what should occur rather than reviewing recommended course of action."

Meetings are frequently held on one item, with no calendar to indicate when key items such as budget workshops or personnel contracts will occur during the year. In addition, the board approves all checks on a monthly basis even though they are usually for purchases of items already approved in the annual budget.

The district does not make use of all procedural methods available to streamline its meetings. For example, while each board meeting has an agenda, no items are grouped for one motion by consent

without discussion. Many districts with which the review team is familiar use a consent calendar which groups items that all board members will likely approve without debate into one item on the agenda which speeds deliberation time. These items usually include bids, resolutions, recognitions, and other similar items. If a board member wants discussion on a particular item in this group, then that item can be separated from the consent agenda.

Another method of reducing the length of meetings is setting specific times for reaching sections of the agenda. For example, if the meeting convenes at 5:30 p.m., the approval of minutes might be scheduled for 5:35 p.m., the consent agenda for 5:40 p.m., recognition of speakers at 5:45 p.m. and so on. This keeps the meeting moving and avoids unnecessarily protracted discussion on any one item.

The board also includes items for discussion and approval which would be best left off the agenda, such as review and approval of the check register. The board should be reviewing revenue and expenditure trends and expenditures for unbudgeted items.

Recommendation 2:

Establish an annual calendar of key meeting dates and subjects and consolidate and shorten board meetings.

The board should establish and publish an annual calendar of meetings. The meeting process should include a current agenda so that items not requiring debate can be approved as a group.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent prepares a calendar of key budget meetings and recommends procedures to streamline board meetings.	September 1998
2.	The board reviews and approves the recommendations, with modifications.	October 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 61.19, requires that each school board member receive annual continuing education consisting of "orientation sessions, an annual team-building session with the local board and the superintendent, and specified hours of continuing education based on identified needs." The codes also states that each newly elected board member shall participate in a local district orientation program and receive an orientation on the Texas Education Code provided by RESC XII. Experienced board members are required to complete an update to the Education Code each year provided by the RESC.

Only the RESCs are empowered to provide these two mandatory, annual training sessions.

Board members also are required to have annual continuing education. For experienced board members, a total of 11 hours annually is required; for new board members, the requirement is 16 hours. Continuing education training can be provided by the RESC or certified providers.

During interviews with the board members and superintendent, the review team was repeatedly informed that the training provided by RESC XII was more appropriate for larger districts, especially those with multiple campuses. As a result, several new board members have not attended the required orientation session provided by RESC XII, and several experienced board members have not attended the required update sessions.

As noted in **Exhibit 1-20**, RESC XII provided multiple opportunities and locations, both in Waco and closer to HISD, where board members could attend required sessions. However, on only one occasion, involving update training, did any HISD board members attend the required training sessions.

Exhibit 1-20
HISD Board Member Attendance at Required Training
1997-98

Type of Training	Number of Board Members Eligible/Required to Attend	Number of Board Members in Attendance	Number of Hours
Orientation			
11/19/97 - RESC XII	1	0	
2/12/98 - RESC XII	1	0	
Update			
9/24/97 - Evant ISD	6	2	2 hours
10/1/97 - RESC XII	4	0	
10/7/97 - Corsicana ISD	4	0	
10/15/97 - Mexia ISD	4	0	
10/22/97 - Salado ISD	4	0	
1/14/98 - RESC XII	4	0	
2/17/98 - RESC XII	4	0	

Source: RESC XII.

The board members, in particular, felt that more targeted training in the "do's and don'ts" of being a board member would be more helpful to a small district like HISD. Several new members felt that they spent the first year learning what a board member's role was rather than dealing with key issues.

Personnel responsible for providing the required training at RESC XII indicated that they would work with HISD to make the training as applicable and meaningful as possible to HISD's situation.

Recommendation 3:

Meet with RESC XII representatives to design board training that meets the needs of HISD board members.

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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president contacts RESC XII representatives and discusses types of training required that would benefit HISD board members.	September 1998
2.	RESC XII personnel design and schedule board training sessions.	October 1998
3.	All board members complete required continuing education hours according to state law.	January 1999 and Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accommodated within existing funds budgeted for training.

B. PLANNING

FINDING

In 1997, the board outlined seven priorities that it wanted addressed and used them for its annual review of the superintendent in January 1998. These items were included in a document entitled, *Long-Range and Short-Term Goals of HISD* (**Exhibit 1-21**). A second document entitled, *Hamilton Independent School District-Long-Range Goals*, was prepared by the district and represents a list of items that could or should be worked on.

Exhibit 1-21
HISD Goals Established in 1997

Goal Number	Summary
1	Continue to pursue purchase of block #8 (parcel of property needed for new school site)
2	Support of a bond issue to include, gym, auditorium, tennis courts or improvements, new high school, fitness center, improvements to the elementary school, and a practice field
3	Develop objectives for the athletic and physical education program and policies and procedures to guide staff in accomplishing them
4	Analyze student learning growth
5	Build a UIL academic program
6	Develop job descriptions for all administrative positions
7	Include certain financial information in board agenda packets

Source: "Long Range and Short Term Goals," HISD.

While both documents use the term "goals" in their title, neither document includes the framework of a three- or five-year plan. A planning document is developed through a process that involves determining community priorities and student needs, translates these to annual objectives, and then ties the objectives to the current operating budget. In HISD's documents no distinction was made in either document as to the relative importance of any of the priorities nor was there any specific measure of progress associated with each of them. No priorities were established for 1997-98.

As required by state law, the district prepares improvement plans for each campus, but they are not specifically tied to objectives for the district nor specific expenditures. A site-based decision-making committee plan and a technology plan also are prepared each year. Site-based teams set goals and objectives for their specific plans. The technology plan is a long-range document that is tied to specific expenditures and updated annually.

Although focus group comments do not directly address long-range planning or community involvement in such efforts, they do demonstrate a positive and supportive attitude toward the district.

Interviews, focus group comments, and survey responses indicate that HISD staff is loyal to the district and supportive of its effort; however, the staff lacks confidence in the district's planning process. For example, several teachers expressed concerns about the development of curriculum for other than the college preparatory students. The question asked was, "Where do we start, who do we talk to?"

Some school districts rely on assistance from the RESC field service agents to provide them tools in how to tie goals and objectives into a school district planning and budgeting process. Some of these agents are previous superintendents who work part-time for the RESCs. Tarleton State University's Educational Administration Department also offers resources and training on planning and budgeting to school districts. HISD has an ongoing relationship with Tarleton. Many of its teachers have been recruited there.

Recommendation 4:

Establish a five-year plan that ties annual district priorities to the budget.

Representatives from all staff groups and from the community should be included in the process of developing these priorities. Such a process provides the district with a way to communicate its priorities, achievements, and results to the entire community.

HISD should avoid a lengthy, formal process, but it does need to establish both long- and short-term goals, milestones to measure progress, and a process to annually review and update their priorities. Using these goals as a framework, annual objectives should be developed for each school and department and should be tied to budget allocations. An evaluation component should be included as a part of each annual objective. The resources available through Tarleton State University or RESC XII could provide valuable assistance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board appoints a committee of HISD staff and community members to develop a set of long- and short-term priorities.	September 1998
2.	The committee recommends a set of priorities to the board for consideration.	January 1999
3.	The board holds a public meeting/hearing on the recommended priorities.	February 1999
4.	The board adopts a set of priorities and refers them to staff for inclusion in the annual budget process.	March 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

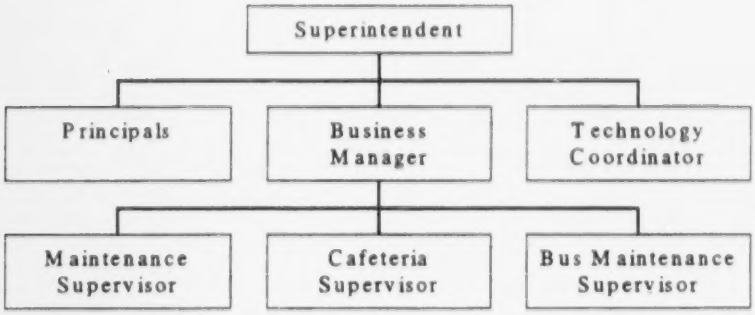
CURRENT SITUATION

HISD is managed by a superintendent and senior staff members who report to the superintendent. As specified by Section 11.201 of the Texas Education Code, the superintendent is primarily responsible for:

- Administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the educational programs, services, and facilities of the district and for annual performance appraisals of the staff.
- Administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all district personnel.
- Termination or suspension of staff members or the nonrenewal of staff members' term contracts.
- Day-to-day management of district operations.
- Preparation of district budgets.
- Preparation of policy recommendations for the board and administration of the implementation of adopted policies.
- Development of appropriate administrative regulations to implement board policies.
- Leadership in attainment of student performance.
- Organization of the district's central administration.

During the course of the review, the former superintendent accepted the position of superintendent in Kemp ISD. During his superintendency at HISD, the district's functions were organized as shown in **Exhibit 1-22**.

Exhibit 1-22
HISD Organization
1997-98



Source: HISD.

Under this organization structure, HISD administrators perform the following duties:

The high school and elementary/junior high school principals are responsible for developing and monitoring curriculum, scheduling classes, evaluating personnel, and dealing with other day-to-day matters, such as student discipline.

The business manager is responsible for all the financial functions within HISD, including payroll, asset management, risk management, and purchasing. The business manager also supervises the transportation, food service, and maintenance functions.

The technology coordinator develops and implements the district's long-range technology plan, provides training for HISD staff, troubleshoots hardware and software, and prepares applications for grant funding.

In June 1998 an interim superintendent, Joe Phariss, was appointed by the board. The board has hired the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to conduct a superintendent search, which is currently underway, and expects to hire a superintendent in early fall 1998.

The total staff full-time equivalents (FTEs) for the district for the past three years are described in **Exhibit 1-23**. The largest increases have been in teachers and educational aides. During this same period, HISD enrollment has increased 7.5 percent.

Exhibit 1-23
HISD Staff FTEs
1994-95 through 1996-97

Staff Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Change over the Period
Teachers	62.8	64.6	69.9	**11.3%**
Professional support	8.2	8.4	9.2	12.2%
Campus administration	2.0	2.0	2.0	0%
Central administration	3.0	2.0	3.0	0%
Educational aides	13.0	16.3	16.0	**23.1%**
Auxiliary staff	20.2	20.2	20.4	1.0%
Total staff	**109.2**	**113.5**	**120.5**	**10.3%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Exhibit 1-24 provides a percentage breakdown of the FTEs by categories of employees.

Exhibit 1-24
Percentage of HISD FTEs by Category
1994-95 through 1996-97

Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Teachers	57.5%	56.9%	58.0%
Professional support	7.5%	7.4%	7.6%
Campus administration	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%
Central administration	2.7%	1.8%	2.5%
Educational aides	11.9%	14.4%	13.3%
Auxiliary staff	18.5%	17.8%	16.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Professional support staff members include all paraprofessional personnel not in central administration, campus administration (principals), central administration (superintendent and secretary), and auxiliary staff (personnel other than educational aides).

Exhibit 1-25 describes the total number of employees by age and gender.

Exhibit 1-25
HISD Employees by Age and Gender
1997-98

Age Group	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total by Age Group	Percentage of Total Employees
70-79 years old	0	2	2	1.6%
60-69	1	3	4	3.3%
50-59	9	16	25	20.3%
40-49	3	42	45	36.6%
30-39	5	21	26	21.1%
20-29	7	14	21	17.0%
Total	**25**	**98**	**123**	**100%**

Source: HISD, April 1998.

HISD's total staffing compared to peer districts is shown in **Exhibit 1-26**. HISD compares favorably in most employee categories, especially percentage of teachers, versus its peer districts, RESC XII, and the state.

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Exhibit 1-26
HISD Staffing Compared to Peer Districts
1996-97

District	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administrators	Central Administrators	Educational Aides	Auxiliary Staff
De Leon	59.0%	3.4%	2.7%	0.9%	11.7%	22.2%
Goldthwaite	58.6%	4.9%	3.6%	1.0%	16.1%	15.8%
Hamilton	**58.0%**	**7.6%**	**1.7%**	**2.5%**	**13.3%**	**16.9%**
Early	56.5%	4.3%	3.2%	1.3%	13.8%	20.9%
Clifton	55.9%	4.8%	2.4%	1.2%	15.3%	20.4%
Hico	55.6%	4.0%	1.7%	1.1%	12.2%	25.4%
Cisco	53.8%	2.8%	2.2%	1.5%	18.3%	21.4%
Texas	**51.9%**	**6.7%**	**2.5%**	**0.9%**	**9.0%**	**29.1%**
RESC XII	**51.9%**	**5.8%**	**2.6%**	**0.9%**	**10.4%**	**28.4%**
Rio Vista	51.4%	6.7%	2.1%	0.7%	9.3%	29.8%
Valley Mills	46.8%	5.5%	3.3%	1.1%	9.9%	33.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

FINDING

As noted in **Exhibit 1-15** teacher turnover for HISD was only 2.6 percent in 1996-97 which is the lowest compared to its peer districts and well below the regional average of 14.1 percent and the state average of 12.6 percent. Based upon interviews by the review team with teachers and responses to the survey, teachers appreciate the high level of community involvement and the advantages of teaching in a small district, such as smaller class sizes.

COMMENDATION

HISD's positive atmosphere has contributed to continuity in teacher staffing.

FINDING

The district uses the policy manual prepared by TASB and updates the manual regularly to adjust for local priorities and statewide changes in law.

The manual is meant to be a policy framework to outline the basic practices that a district must have in place. Beyond this framework, it is necessary for the district to set out specific practices, management guidelines, or standard operating procedures with which to govern how day-to-day issues are treated and to ensure that board policies are carried out.

HISD has not developed operating procedures to guide district staff. During on-site work, the review team noted there were no procedures governing the preparation of the board agenda, how to formally place an item on the agenda, how a parent, teacher, or administrator can place an item on the agenda, the type of information to be included to support the agenda items, nor the procedures governing the running of board meetings (e.g., public speakers and time limit, consent agenda). In the financial area, there is no budget calendar which describes key dates during the budget preparation and approval process, and there is no policy defining the purchasing system, when bids are required, how informal

bids are to be taken, and how vendors are to be selected. For travel reimbursement and ticket purchase for HISD board and staff members for the recent trip to the state tournament by the girls' basketball team, there was no district procedure.

In a district the size of HISD many key functional areas are handled by one position, making it critical for people to be cross-trained. Operating procedures that document these functions are needed so that these tasks can be accomplished in the event of an absence or sustained illness of key staff.

Recommendation 5:

Develop and implement a set of management guidelines or standard operating procedures for key policy areas, and train all staff in their application.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent reviews the policy manual and assigns each senior staff member responsibility for developing procedures for key policies, and presents those to the board for review and approval.	November 1998
2.	The staff members develop procedures and review them with the superintendent.	November 1998 - February 1999
3.	The superintendent presents the recommended procedures to the board for approval.	March 1999
4.	The board reviews the procedures, makes modifications as necessary, and approves the procedures.	March 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Texas school districts are required to submit information to TEA at three times during the year as part of the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data collection: in October, initial information on student enrollment, annual budget, and staffing is submitted; in February, audited financial information for the prior fiscal year is submitted; and in June, final student data is submitted. This information covers general district information plus information in special areas that determines funding for the next fiscal year, including: special education, bilingual education, Career and Technology Education (CATE), and gifted and talented education.

HISD's PEIMS data is entered by the bookkeeper in the WinSchool system and transmitted to RESC XII. The information for 1996-97 was the first time that the bookkeeper had entered this information. According to the business manager, prior to entry in the system, the information is reviewed and approved by each principal and forwarded to the superintendent for final review and sign-off.

During the course of the review, members of the review team noted that the student participation information for CATE reported through PEIMS for 1996-97 was out of line with that for prior years. According to the information submitted by the district to the state, in 1996-97, only 8.9 percent of HISD's students were enrolled in CATE courses. This compares with 19.1 and 20.6 percent in 1994-95 and 1995-96, respectively.

During an interview with the lead CATE teacher, the review team members questioned why there was such a sharp decline. The lead teacher was unaware of the data, and determined that there had been an entry mistake in the transmittal of the information. In most other districts, PEIMS data is not only reviewed by the principals but also by the program managers, especially those whose program funding is based upon data submitted through PEIMS. While the program managers may not be able to determine whether the numbers for their programs are completely accurate, they can identify where egregious errors, such as the one noted for CATE, have occurred.

Recommendation 6:

Include all program managers in the review of PEIMS data prior to submission to the Texas Education Agency.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager provides PEIMS submission data to the principals and appropriate program managers prior to submission deadlines for review and modification.	October, January, May, and Ongoing
2.	The principals and program managers review the data for reasonableness and identify any potential inaccuracies and return the data to the business manager.	October, January, May, and Ongoing
3.	The bookkeeper makes any changes, finalizes the information, and the business manager submits it to the superintendent for final approval.	October, January, May, and Ongoing
4.	The superintendent approves the report and transmits it to TEA.	October, January, May, and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

D. SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

CURRENT SITUATION

Site-based decision-making (SBDM), a state and federal initiative in education management, focuses the full resources of a school district at the school level and encourages all decisions to be made as close to the people affected by them as possible. The major focus of SBDM is to empower students, teachers, parents, principals, and schools.

HISD adopted a revised SBDM plan in May 1997. This plan created three SBDM committees: district, high school, and elementary/junior high school. This plan also provided authorization, scope of responsibility, committee composition, electoral processes for member selection, and approval processes. The committees meet once per month to review issues and concerns. Matters that have been brought to the attention of the committee but do not pertain to site-base management are referred to administration.

FINDING

While each of the SBDM committees is charged with assisting the superintendent and/or the principals of the two schools, there is a widely divergent opinion as to how effective the committees are. Board members consistently cited the SBDM process as a strength of the district; however, interviews with the chairs of the three committees brought an opposite point of view. Everyone interviewed agreed that SBDM was used as the principal determined.

Overall, the committee chairs indicated that they don't feel that much of anything occurs at the committee level. Their view is that as long as they support the administration's position, they will be supported, but if they disagree or promote a different position, the administration will be critical.

At the high school, each year for the last four years, the staff has compiled the budget and submitted it to the SBDM committee before it goes to the business manager. Each staff member is requested to complete a budget request form. The requests are compiled by department and forwarded to the SBDM before submission to the business manager. HISD has just begun the same process this year at the elementary level.

The chair of the SBDM committee at the elementary/junior high school felt that the committee had little influence on the decisions that affect their students, programs, or teaching responsibilities. According to the chair of the SBDM committee at the high school, the high school principal does not allow the committee to be involved in key problem areas, such as student attendance.

Teachers were more supportive of the SBDM process. In response to the written survey, 69 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that the SBDM process is implemented effectively in HISD with only 21 percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this assertion.

Campus goals are set by the committees. The authority levels of the committees are not clearly understood by the members of the committees. The plan adopted by HISD and revised in 1997 is written in general statements, especially when it comes to definition of the roles of the committees. It uses broad, vague terminology such as "be involved," "assist," "address," and "participate" to define

the roles of the committees. Other than the document prepared by the committees, there was no other documentation of roles or responsibilities of the committees, district staff, nor the board.

Some districts have addressed these problems by creating a model that assigns responsibility at each level for providing input, offering recommendations, making decisions, and giving approval (**Exhibit 1-27**).

Exhibit 1-27
Partial Site-Based Decision-Making Model
Spring Branch Independent School District

Function	School Principal	Central Office	Superintendent	School Board	Campus Advisory Teams
Goal setting: Develop campus improvement plan	D	R	R	A	I
Personnel: Make final recommendation for the selection of new personnel and assignment of new and current campus staff	D	R			
Budget: Determine use of campus allocations for special populations programs	D	I	A		I

Source: Spring Branch Independent School District Model for Increasing School Effectiveness Through More Campus-Based Decision-Making

I = Input: share/provide information/advise
D = Decide: make a choice/judgment
R = Recommend: to present as worthy of acceptance
A = Approve: give formal/official sanction

Recommendation 7:

Clearly define the levels of authority associated with each level in the SBDM process, and communicate this new policy to all HISD staff.

The decisions of the district and building-level committees must be in response to district goals, and an evaluation plan must be included to measure how well the decision teams are reaching stated objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, principals, and SBDM chairs meet as a committee to review current policies and problems.	September 1998
2.	The committee recommends levels of authority for key functions and presents these to the board.	January 1999
3.	The board reviews and approves the recommendations.	February 1999

4. The new policy is implemented. March 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

E. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

CURRENT SITUATION

As personnel officer for HISD, the superintendent develops job descriptions for administrative positions, conducts salary surveys, recommends pay increases, recruits and interviews candidates for positions, and recommends personnel policies or changes to the board.

HISD is in the fortunate position of not having to actively recruit for personnel, especially teachers. The former superintendent indicated that he always had a file of applicants for teaching positions. However, he did not regularly visit several local colleges and participate in local job fairs.

FINDING

Similar to many small districts, HISD does not have staffing formulas to guide decisions about adding/replacing staff. According to the former superintendent, "If someone leaves, we fill the position. If we add a program, we add a teacher."

The Texas Association of Rural Schools (TARS) sponsored research on the issue of staffing allocations in rural districts and issued a final report in April 1996 entitled, *Performance and Diseconomies of Scale in Texas School Districts of Less Than 5,000 Students*. The report concludes that there are diseconomies of scale in staffing and costs associated with smaller districts and recommends modifications to the current funding formulas. It also recommends models of staffing for elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools of various student size.

For example, if the TARS model is applied to Hamilton High School, with 251 students in grades 9-12, it would result in the following:

Assumptions: Special education students will generate 12 student FTEs (i.e., 12 percent of 251 total students = 30 students). Special education personnel are not included in the staffing formula.

Career and Technology Education (CATE) will involve 110 students and 24 student FTEs.

Regular education and all other areas will have 215 student FTEs (i.e., 251 - 12 - 24 = 215).

Personnel: Regular teachers will teach no more than 100 students per day.

Teachers will teach five periods of a seven-period day.

With 215 regular education FTEs, there will be 20 students per section and 78 sections which will result in 15.5 classroom teachers.
Given the need to maintain gifted and talented, band, yearbook, student council, cheerleaders, etc., and to have the cadre of fully certified teachers to offer needed academic specializations, the model school requires 4.5 teachers more than is necessary just to cover sections.

Additional personnel would include: one principal, one counselor, one librarian, one instruction aide, one office clerk, and one secretary; two technology aides; and one half-time assistant principal and one half-time nurse.

Use of the model compared to HISD's current staffing at the school and current costs are shown in **Exhibit 1-28**.

Exhibit 1-28
Comparison of TARS Staffing Model to Current Staffing Pattern at Hamilton High School

Position	Current Number	Current Salary Cost	Proposed Number	Proposed Salary Cost
Classroom teachers	23	$734,685	20	$638,857
Principal	1	$49,172	1	$49,172
Assistant principal	0	0	0.5	$39,500
Counselor	1	$43,544	1	$43,544
Librarian	1	$39,600	1	$39,600
Nurse	0.33	$12,453	0.5	$18,680
Technology aide	0.33	$3,535	2	$21,212
Instructional aide	0	0	1	$16,260
Library aide	0	0	0	0
Secretary	1	$12,932	1	$12,932
Office clerk	0	0	1	$12,932
Total	**27.66**	**$895,921**	**29**	**$892,689**

Sources: HISD staffing list and salary schedule, and Texas Association of Rural Schools, Performance and Diseconomies of Scale in Texas School Districts of Less Than 5,000 Students, April 1996.

By using the TARS model, HISD could save up to $3,232 in staffing costs at the high school.

The comparison is more difficult at the junior high and elementary school levels due to the combined campus. The savings from maintaining a shared facility are evident from the following comparison. If the TARS model is applied to Hamilton Junior High School, with 209 students in grades 6-8, it would result in the following:

Assumptions: Special education students will generate 11 student FTEs. Special education personnel are not included in the staffing formula.

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CATE will generate 13 student FTEs.

Regular education and all other areas will have 185 student FTEs.

Personnel: Regular teachers will teach no more than 100 students per day.

Teachers will teach five periods of a seven-period day.

With 185 regular education FTEs, there will be 20 students per section and 72 sections which will result in 15 classroom teachers.

Additional personnel would include: one principal, one counselor, one librarian, one secretary, one library aide, and one technology aide; one and one-half instructional aides; and one half-time office clerk and one half-time nurse.

For the junior high school, **Exhibit 1-29** presents the same comparison.

Exhibit 1-29
Comparison of TARS Staffing Model to Current Staffing Pattern at Hamilton Junior High School

Position	Current Number	Current Salary Cost	Proposed Number	Proposed Salary Cost
Classroom teachers	11	$385,744	15	$526,020
Principal	0.5	$23,870	1	$47,740
Assistant principal	0	0	0	0
Counselor	0.5	$18,636	1	$37,272
Librarian	0	0	1	$39,600
Nurse	0.33	$12,533	0.5	$18,680
Technology aide	0.33	$3,535	1	$10,606
Instructional aide	0	0	1.5	$24,390
Library aide	0.5	$8,130	0	0
Secretary	0.5	$8,956	1	$17,911
Office clerk	0	0	0.5	$9,245
Total	**13.66**	**$461,404**	**22.5**	**$731,464**

Sources: HISD staffing list and salary schedule, and Texas Association of Rural Schools, Performance and Diseconomies of Scale in Texas School Districts of Less Than 5,000 Students, April 1996.

The number of teachers is much lower than the model because a number of the elementary teachers, particularly the 5th grade, physical education, and music/fine arts teachers, teach one or more sections at the junior high school level. This negates the need for full-time teachers that a separate facility would employ. The existence of only one librarian, one nurse, and one technology aide for all three levels also reduces overall staffing costs. As a result, the district's current staffing pattern costs $270,060 less than the TARS model recommends.

The shared facilities also has an affect (or impact) on the elementary school. If the TARS model is applied to the Ann Whitney Elementary School, with 478 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, it would result in the following:

Assumptions: Special education students will generate 27 student FTEs. Special education personnel are not included in the staffing formula.

Pre-kindergarten has 37 FTEs.

Regular education will have 414 student FTEs.

Personnel: The maximum average teacher-pupil ratio for regular education teachers will be 1 to 18 at pre-K through grade 3 and 1 to 20 at grades 4 and 5. This will result in 25 classroom teachers.

The average class size for regular education special subject teachers will be 30 for PE, music, and art. This will result in four teachers.

Additional personnel would include one of each of the following principal, assistant principal, counselor, librarian, nurse, secretary, office clerk, and technology aide; three and one-half instructional aides; and half-time library aide.

For the elementary school, **Exhibit 1-30** presents the same comparison.

Exhibit 1-30
Comparison of TARS Staffing Model to Current Staffing Pattern at Hamilton Elementary School

Position	Current Number	Current Salary Cost	Proposed Number	Proposed Salary Cost
Classroom teachers	29	$882,490	29	$882,490
Principal	0.5	$23,870	1	$47,740
Assistant principal	0	0	1	$39,500
Counselor	0.5	$18,636	1	$37,272
Librarian	0	0	1	$39,600
Nurse	0.33	$12,533	1	$18,680
Technology aide	0.33	$3,535	1	$10,606
Instructional aide	2	$28,400	1.5	$21,300
Library aide	0.5	$8,130	0	0
Secretary	0.5	$8,956	1	$17,911
Office clerk	0	0	1	$18,490
Total	**33.66**	**$986,550**	**38.5**	**$1,133,589**

Sources: HISD staffing list and salary schedule, and Texas Association of Rural Schools, Performance and Diseconomies of Scale in Texas School Districts of Less Than 5,000 Students, April 1996.

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At the elementary level, the shared facilities affect the positions of principal, assistant principal, counselor, secretary, and office clerk, which are either half-time or non-existent at HISD but full-time in the model. Also affecting the staffing are one nurse and one technology aide for the entire district. As a result, HISD is $147,039 below what the model staffing pattern would cost.

COMMENDATION

HISD use of shared facilities has reduced staffing costs.

FINDING

Staffing decisions are historically based with no formal guidelines for adding positions. Informally, new positions are added due to increased enrollment, the addition of new programs, or the need to respond to state mandates. Occasionally, a position is added when it is determined that the scope of responsibilities and sheer amount of work in a position demand relief and assistance.

At the high school level, where only one paraprofessional supports the principal and the counselor, many staff members and parents shared concerns about the lack of consistency of student discipline, program and curriculum continuity, equity in programs for all students, and the ineffectiveness of SBDM. The principal and counselor are both spending inordinate amounts of time doing their own clerical work which limits their availability for key tasks. Interviews with, and survey responses from, teachers made it clear that the principal's time is consumed by administrative matters that leave little time for instructional improvement or staff support.

HISD has used the shared facilities effectively in keeping overall staffing low; however, when the district occupies the new high school, the ability to share staff will diminish.

Recommendation 8:

Review the TARS research and its applicability to HISD and develop staffing and funding allocations in the budget process that are reviewed annually.

HISD needs to evaluate alternatives in advance of occupying the facility to ensure that key staff members have adequate time to support the teachers. The TARS model provides a framework for conducting such an evaluation.

HISD staff and board members also should consider the district's short- and long-term priorities and make modifications to the staffing models to reflect local priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints a staff committee, including teachers, to review the TARS research.	September 1998
2.	The committee reviews the research and applies the models to HISD.	October 1998 - February 1999

3.	The committee recommends modifications to the current approach to the superintendent for inclusion in the annual budget.	March 1999
4.	The superintendent reviews the recommendations and incorporates them in the annual budget preparation process.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact will vary according to what alternatives the district develops and how it modifies the TARS model to consider the shared facilities.

F. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A high level of community involvement can be reached when the district actively asks for the input of the community and responds quickly to their suggestions and ideas. An effective school district community relations program can be established through regular communication with the media, parents, business and community leaders, students and employees.

Community involvement usually includes activities that enable parents, business leaders, and others with an interest in public education to have a voice in a school district's activities. Many of these activities can be very visible in the community so the superintendent or a high ranking administrator usually handles the coordination of these activities.

CURRENT SITUATION

The TSPR review team initiated the study by conducting an open community forum at the school cafeteria where any resident could come and express his or her views either verbally to one of the TSPR team members, or provide written comments about any aspect of the district's operations. Particular comments made by residents were used by the review team in targeting areas specific to community concern during the data collection and interview phases.

During the week beginning February 23, 1998, survey instruments were provided to survey groups either in person, placing them in the internal HISD mail, or giving them to students to take home to parents. The survey groups included: HISD teachers, employees, principals, and central and school administrators, students (11th and 12th graders only), and a random sample of approximately 150 parents. A copy of each survey instrument and the results of each survey are included in **Appendix A**.

Each of the surveys was self-administered, and all participants were asked to return their surveys by March 5, 1998. Each person receiving a survey was provided a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope that was mailed directly to WCL Enterprises in Houston, Texas. Only surveys received through March 19, 1998 were included in the results.

Information requested from those surveyed included rankings of the various areas covered by a school performance review. Additional space was provided for comments.

Exhibit 1-31 shows the total number of responses received in each of the categories surveyed.

Exhibit 1-31
Responses to Written Survey by Group Surveyed

Survey Group	Number Distributed	Number of Respondents
Central and School Administrators	3	2
Principals	2	2
Teachers	60	39
Employees	75	49
Students	115	37
Parents	150	58

Source: Responses to written survey administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Key conclusions drawn from the survey responses by the review team included the following:

- Administrators, principals, teachers, and parents feel that the district has a very good relationship with the community.
- Administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students believe that the district provides a quality education for its students.
- All groups either agree or strongly agree that the schools are a safe learning environment.
- All groups agree that the schools are run in a cost effective manner.
- All groups agree that the school facilities are in good condition.

The survey asked all groups to rank the various functional areas of the district. The grades given (with 5 equal to an A and 1 equal to an F) by the teachers and the parents are presented in **Exhibits 1-32** and **1-33**, respectively. The personnel function was rated the highest by the parents while the teachers graded instruction as the highest. Both the parents and the teachers graded the food service function as one of the lowest. The teachers graded the custodial performance as the lowest.

Exhibit 1-32
Teachers' Grades of HISD Functional Areas and Overall

Functional Area	Teachers' Grade
Instruction	4.82
Transportation	4.71
Maintenance	4.39
Personnel	4.24
Purchasing	4.21
Overall District Performance	4.18
Planning and Budgeting	4.16
Finance	4.05
Technology	4.03
Staff Development	4.00
Food Service	3.87
Custodial	3.71

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Exhibit 1-33
Parents' Grades of HISD Functional Areas and Overall

Functional Area	Parents' Grade
Personnel	4.25
Transportation	4.22
Instruction	4.19
Maintenance	4.15
Overall District Performance	4.13
Custodial	4.13
Staff Development	4.04
Finance	4.02
Purchasing	4.00
Planning and Budgeting	3.91
Technology	3.81
Food Service	3.56

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Five focus groups also were conducted to obtain information about the impact of HISD in the community. The focus groups involved parents, business and community leaders, teachers, and non-parent residents. A summary of the comments from these focus groups is included in **Appendix B**.

FINDING

Focus group participants frequently mentioned that in a city the size of Hamilton, school activities are the center of attention. Many community groups use school district facilities on a regular basis for meetings, recreational events, or social gatherings.

Based on the responses to the surveys and the comments from the focus groups, the district enjoys a positive relationship with various community groups. These relationships have been established through the positive impact of the various extra- and co-curricular programs in the district, especially at the high school level, such as band, sports, UIL academics, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and Future Homemakers of America (FHA). The district has allowed many community groups access to the school facilities such as the gym and the athletic fields.

The superintendent and members of the school board are primarily responsible for coordinating community involvement and are very active in many areas of the community. The results of the survey (**Exhibit 1-34**) indicate that the perception of the district's relationship with various community groups is very good, with most respondents grading the relationship an "A" or "B."

Exhibit 1-34
Survey Respondents' Evaluation of HISD's Relationship With the Community

Administrators	Principals	Teachers	Parents
B or better	B or better	B or better	B or better
100%	100%	85%	71%

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Nowhere is the evidence of strong community support more evident than in the pages of the local newspaper, *The Hamilton Herald-News*. The paper is published weekly and has a circulation throughout the county which includes the boundaries of HISD. In virtually every issue there is significant coverage devoted to the many activities of the school district including sporting events, band, school board meetings, and other school sponsored events.

The review team obtained every issue of the paper from January 1, 1998 through April 30, 1998, a total of 18 issues. A summary of the space devoted by the paper to school district activities is provided in **Exhibit 1-35**. The newspaper provides significant coverage of HISD events, devoting an average of 10 percent of the space in an issue to the district. As a result, the district has an excellent vehicle in *The Hamilton Herald-News* for communicating with the community about the events of the district.

Exhibit 1-35
Newspaper Coverage Devoted to HISD
January - April 1998

Date of Paper	Total Pages	Total Square Inches	Total Square Inches Devoted to HISD	Percentage of Total Newspaper Devoted to HISD
January 1, 1998	14	3,748	225	6%
January 8, 1998	16	4,284	172	4%
January 15, 1998	18	4,819	145	3%
January 22, 1998	16	4,284	472	11%
January 29, 1998	14	3,748	263	7%
February 5, 1998	16	4,284	472	11%
February 12, 1998	16	4,284	215	5%
February 19, 1998	18	4,819	482	10%
February 26, 1998	18	4,819	386	8%
March 5, 1998	20	5,355	804	15%
March 12, 1998	18	4,819	868	18%
March 19, 1998	18	4,819	237	13%
March 26, 1998	16	4,284	215	5%
April 2, 1998	20	5,355	750	14%
April 9, 1998	18	4,819	531	11%
April 16, 1998	18	4,819	482	10%
April 23, 1998	20	5,355	697	13%
April 30, 1998	18	4,819	723	15%
Totals	**312**	**83,533**	**8,139**	**10%**

Source: Review of editions of The Hamilton Herald-News, January - April, 1998.

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In addition to the newspaper coverage, the district has also developed an Internet web site which can be accessed at ***hamilton.k12.tx.us***. The web site is well designed and includes information about the elementary/junior high school, the high school, and the administration. In addition, web surfers can look at the most recent TAAS scores, review the school calendar, and access a map to Hamilton.

The local radio station KCLW, AM 900, is also a big supporter of HISD. The station broadcasts live all HISD sporting events, including home and away games. The high school principal indicated that he can call the station and let them know about an event or an announcement and the station will air the information the same day.

COMMENDATION

HISD has an excellent relationship with the local community based on regular communication through the local newspaper, radio station, and a new internet site.

FINDING

In May 1997, HISD held a bond election; the first brought to the voters in over 10 years. The $5,490,000 bond issue passed by a margin of more than 2 to 1. The bonds are designated to build a new high school and for other capital improvements.

Prior to the bond election the school board, with the assistance of the superintendent and several community leaders and parents, established a special committee to educate the community and promote the bond program. The committee was known as The Citizens For Hamilton Schools. Once formed, the committee was organized and run by parents and members of the community. The committee raised private funds to pay for brochures and advertising. In addition, data was gathered and information was developed and handed out at community forums.

The committee encouraged members of the community to ask hard questions and they provided the answers with hard facts. Members of the focus groups included both supporters and detractors of the bond issue. After attending the meetings, asking questions and reviewing all the information, many detractors became supporters. And, as a result of these forums, the original amount of the bond issue was reduced. The cooperation and community effort continues to provide the basis for open communication and involvement as building, planning, and construction begin.

COMMENDATION

The teamwork exhibited by the district and the community in the passage of the bond issue is an excellent example of involving the community in the critical decision-making processes of the district.

FINDING

The school district and the community have been working together this spring in a special program whereby members of the student council of Hamilton High School are working for the City of Hamilton for no pay. The students are installing or changing local street signs and historical markers within the city limits. The City of Hamilton, in lieu of paying a wage to the students, has made an initial contribution of $100 for work completed this spring to the Student Council to fund their operations and

programs. According to the City Administrator for the City of Hamilton, the City will resume this program in the fall and plans total contributions to the Student Council of approximately $250.

COMMENDATION

HISD and the City of Hamilton are working together to benefit students and accomplish needed city improvements.

FINDING

Central Texas College (CTC) offers a number of off-campus courses at HISD. CTC also has participated with HISD in the purchase of jointly-used computers, and employs HISD staff and teachers to teach courses. Based upon our interviews it appears that this relationship is one that has evolved over time. Not only are the HISD students taking college level classes, but the local citizens are also attending classes.

COMMENDATION

The district collaborates with Central Texas College and makes higher education available and affordable to the citizens of Hamilton.

FINDING

HISD uses the local newspaper, *The Hamilton Herald-News*, as its primary means of communication. The newspaper provides extensive coverage as noted in **Exhibit 1-35**, and sends a reporter to cover every board meeting and most special events, when notified by HISD. However, the district does not provide a regular flow of information on all HISD activities nor is there a weekly column by a board member, the superintendent, or one of the principals. According to the editor of the newspaper, the district has not used the newspaper as a vehicle to raise issues and receive feedback from the community, or to share information on issues and encourage readers to write in, or to respond to a survey questionnaire about critical issues. The editor of the newspaper indicated that he would be glad to make space available each week for a regular column by someone from HISD.

The district's primary source of community input comes from school support organizations such as site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees, Parent/Teacher Organizations (PTO), booster organizations, and local community/civic groups, like the Kiwanis Club.

The elementary/junior high school has strong PTO organizations, and the high school has several very strong booster clubs for sports and band. With the exception of the committee for the passage of the bond sale, the district does not have a long-range planning committee.

The district communicates infrequently through a newsletter, article, or a mailout about specific events. No system is in place to regularly update information on the district's web site. The SBDM committee agenda that was posted had not been updated since December 10, 1997, and other parts of the web page did not have current data.

Many districts use a variety of techniques for two-way communication such as quarterly open forums or town hall meetings; articles or columns written by teachers, board members, or administration; and special news sections on the Internet web site.

Recommendation 9:

Develop an approach for open, two-way communication with the community on a regular, planned basis.

The district should develop a plan for establishing two-way communications with the community. One method could be quarterly or semi-annual open forums, like the one used on the bond issue.

HISD should formalize its relationship with the local newspaper and radio station to provide regular columns about school activities, including perhaps a regular column from a board member, the superintendent, a principal, or teacher. A response method, such as a clip-and-mail trailer, could be added to the end of the column to facilitate feedback from readers.

Finally, the district should provide more current information on the web site for the community to access. This would be an excellent opportunity for students in computer or journalism classes to constantly update the data on the web site. In addition, the newspaper could be asked to print the web address at the conclusion of each article with a tag line such as "see the HISD web page for additional information." Also, there should be a way for parents and others to send email to an electronic suggestion box on the web site.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board appoints a committee headed by the superintendent to develop a communication model.	September 1998
2.	The superintendent works with the board and a group of teachers, principals, community leaders, and parents to discuss the communication model.	October - December 1998
3.	The communication plan is presented to the board for adoption.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

While the district enjoys a favorable relationship with the community, the district has not developed targeted approaches to involve members of specific groups within the community. For example, there are few programs designed to reach the senior citizens of the district that no longer have children in the district but still pay taxes to support the district. The district admits all citizens over 55 years of age free into any HISD event, and the principal and superintendent hand out passes once or twice a year to senior citizens that frequent the City of Hamilton Senior Center.

Some districts have developed programs to involve senior citizens. Glen Rose ISD issues a special card to all taxpayers over 65 that admits them into all school sponsored activities, such as sporting events, plays, UIL academic competitions, and concerts, for free or for a substantially reduced price. Other districts, such as Spring ISD, provide transportation to senior citizens to assist them in getting to events.

More importantly members are asked to become involved in the lives of the children of the district. Glen Rose ISD's seniors interact with the students in the alternative education program. Other districts use retired citizens as mentors or tutors for students. One school, observed by the review team, had "Class Grandparents" that came in several days a week to read stories to younger children.

Recommendation 10:

Develop a formal program for senior citizens.

The district could provide senior citizens with a school calendar each month and perhaps provide them with a HISD souvenir each year, like a cap, T-Shirts, or mug in the school colors. Sponsorship by local area businesses should be sought to defray the minimal cost of these souvenirs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board considers the development of a senior citizen program.	August 1998
2.	The board, superintendent, and a committee of senior citizens meet to discuss the possibilities.	September 1998
3.	A formal plan is presented to the board to either accept or deny.	October 1998
4.	The program is announced to the public and launched either during the holidays or to start the new year.	November 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

It is assumed that the cost of implementing this program will be offset by business sponsors.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Chapter 2

EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This chapter reviews key areas of HISD's educational service delivery system and performance measures, including:

A. Student Performance
B. School Management
C. Staff Development
D. Curriculum Development
E. Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs
F. Technology
G. Special Education
H. Gifted and Talented
I. Career and Technology Education

CURRENT SITUATION

Hamilton has two schools: a combination elementary and junior high school that includes students from early childhood through grade 8, and a high school that includes grades 9-12. Enrollment for the last four years for these two schools is described in **Exhibit 2-1**.

Exhibit 2-1
HISD Student Enrollment by Grade Level/School
1994-95 through 1997-98

Grade Level/School	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98 (as of 3/30/98)	Percent Change
Hamilton Elementary/Junior High School	631	687	692	687	8.9%
Hamilton High School	247	240	252	251	1.6%
Total	**878**	**927**	**944**	**938**	**6.8%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97 and HISD statistics for 1997-98.

According to school records, the elementary campus is named Ann Whitney Elementary School, however it is not formally a separate campus and for purposes of this report will be referred to as shown in the above chart.

The enrollments and accreditation status for HISD and its peer districts are presented in **Exhibit 2-2**. HISD and four of its peer districts received the accreditation status of "Recognized".

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Exhibit 2-2
HISD and Peer District Enrollments and Accreditation Status
1996-97

District	Enrollment	Accreditation Status
Early	1,221	Recognized
Clifton	1,210	Academically Acceptable
Cisco	955	Recognized
Hamilton	**944**	**Recognized**
Rio Vista	876	Recognized
De Leon	778	Academically Acceptable
Goldthwaite	639	Academically Acceptable
Hico	625	Recognized
Valley Mills	470	Academically Acceptable

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Since 1993, Texas has rated and accredited districts and schools based upon specific performance measures including the reading, writing, and math portions of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test and dropout and attendance rates. Districts are evaluated each year, and beginning with the 1995-96 year districts are rated Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable, or Unacceptable. **Exhibit 2-3** shows statewide ratings in each category for 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-3
Number of Texas School Districts by Accreditation Level
1996-97

Accreditation Level	Number of Districts Receiving This Level of Accreditation
Exemplary	65
Recognized	321
Academically Acceptable	650
Academically Unacceptable	4
Unacceptable	3

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

The enrollment by grade within each HISD school as of March 30, 1998 is presented in **Exhibit 2-4**.

Exhibit 2-4
HISD Student Enrollment by School and Grade
as of March 30, 1998

Grade	Elementary/Junior High School	High School
Early childhood	11	-
Pre-kindergarten	37	-
Kindergarten	88	-
First	66	-
Second	70	-
Third	70	-
Fourth	69	-
Fifth	67	-
Sixth	62	-
Seventh	71	-
Eighth	76	-
Ninth	-	68
Tenth	-	74
Eleventh	-	43
Twelfth	-	66
Total	**687**	**251**

Source: HISD.

HISD' student population is 91.9 percent Anglo (**Exhibit 2-5**).

Exhibit 2-5
Changes in Ethnicity of HISD Student Population
1994-95 through 1996-97

Ethnic Group	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Anglo	92.8%	93.1%	91.9%
Hispanic	6.6%	6.3%	6.9%
African American	0%	0.1%	0.2%
Other	0.5%	0.5%	0.9%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.
Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Although the ethnic composition of HISD's student population is very similar to its peers, it is very different from the remaining districts in its region and within the state as a whole. (**Exhibit 2-6**).

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Exhibit 2-6
Ethnicity of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State Student Populations
1996-97

District	Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Other
Rio Vista	95.1%	4.9%	0%	0%
Hamilton	**91.9%**	**6.9%**	**0.2%**	**0.9%**
Early	89.9%	8.1%	0.5%	1.5%
Cisco	87.1%	9.8%	2.6%	1.4%
Valley Mills	85.3%	8.3%	5.3%	1.1%
Hico	80.8%	19.0%	0.2%	0%
Goldthwaite	80.1%	18.6%	1.3%	0%
Clifton	76.5%	18.1%	5.3%	0.1%
De Leon	67.0%	32.9%	0%	0.1%
RESC XII	**58.0%**	**17.6%**	**22.6%**	**1.9%**
Texas	**45.6%**	**37.4%**	**14.3%**	**2.7%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.
Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

HISD teacher ethnicity is similar to the student population (**Exhibit 2-7**).

Exhibit 2-7
HISD Student and Teacher Ethnicity
1996-97

Ethnicity	Students	Teachers
Anglo	91.9%	98.6%
Hispanic	6.9%	0%
African American	0.2%	0%
Other	0.9%	1.4%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

The expenditures by program for 1996-97 closely parallel the expenditures of the prior two years (**Exhibit 2-8**). Regular education program funding increased from 68.9 to 71.5 percent of budgeted operating expenditures, Career and Technology Education (CATE) expenditures increased from 5.1 to 7.3 percent, and compensatory program funding declined from 11.4 to 6.5 percent.

Exhibit 2-8
HISD Instructional Program Expenditures
as a Percentage of Total Instructional Operating Expenditures
1994-95 through 1996-97

Program	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Regular education	**68.9%**	**70.5%**	**71.5%**
Special education	11.8%	12.4%	11.9%
Compensatory education	**11.4%**	**10.1%**	**6.5%**
Career and Technology education	5.1%	4.3%	7.3%
Bilingual/ESL education	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Gifted and talented education	2.6%	2.4%	2.6%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

HISD expenditures are at the state average for regular and special education, below for compensatory and bilingual/ESL, higher for gifted and talented education, and almost double the average for CATE (**Exhibit 2-9**). HISD is well above its peer districts in expenditures for CATE and gifted and talented programs.

Exhibit 2-9
HISD, Peer Districts, RESC XII, and State Instructional Operating Program
Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Instructional Operating Expenditures
1996-97

District	Regular Education	Special Education	Compensatory Education	Career and Technology Education	Bilingual/ ESL Education	Gifted and Talented Education
Clifton	97.9%	1.2%	0.1%	0.8%	0%	0%
Valley Mills	82.2%	6.1%	3.4%	5.4%	2.3%	0.6%
Hico	80.2%	7.7%	6.3%	4.0%	1.1%	0.7%
RESC XII	**75.3%**	**11.4%**	**6.4%**	**4.0%**	**1.0%**	**1.9%**
Rio Vista	72.5%	17.8%	5.9%	2.1%	0%	1.7%
Hamilton	**71.5%**	**11.9%**	**6.5%**	**7.3%**	**0.2%**	**2.6%**
Early	71.3%	15.9%	7.1%	3.4%	1.0%	1.2%
Texas	**71.0%**	**11.7%**	**7.8%**	**4.0%**	**3.8%**	**1.7%**
Cisco	66.8%	15.8%	9.6%	6.1%	0%	1.7%
De Leon	66.3%	13.1%	12.2%	7.0%	0.1%	1.3%
Goldthwaite	59.2%	33.1%	2.7%	4.0%	0.4%	0.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.
Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Instructional program funding has increased 20 percent over the past three years. All programs have increased in funding with the exception of compensatory programs, which have decreased by over $80,000 or 32 percent during this period (**Exhibit 2-10**).

Exhibit 2-10
HISD Instructional Program Expenditures
1994-95 through 1996-97

Program	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage Change over the Period
Regular education	$1,577,710	$1,787,439	$1,961,206	24%
Special education	$269,990	$315,465	$327,000	21%
Compensatory education	$261,284	$256,453	$178,646	-32%
Career and Technology Education	$115,756	$109,721	$199,278	72%
Bilingual/ESL education	$4,410	$4,410	$4,823	9%
Gifted and talented education	$59,053	$61,760	$70,907	20%
Total	**$2,288,203**	**$2,535,248**	**$2,741,860**	**20%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

HISD has been below both the regional and state averages for expenditures for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and economically disadvantaged over the past three years. However, the percentage of HISD students classified as economically disadvantaged has increased by five percent of the total student population over that period while the region's and the state's percentages have changed only 0.9 and 1.8 percent respectively (**Exhibits 2-11 and 2-12**). Interviews with community leaders, teachers, and parents indicated that the growth in this student population is due to several factors including parents moving from urban areas to seek employment or remove their children from potential negative influences such as gangs and juvenile delinquency. Many of these families are already on welfare or cannot find jobs within the small, rural communities in the area.

Exhibit 2-11
HISD, RESC XII, and State Economically Disadvantaged Students
as a Percentage of Total Student Population
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Hamilton	33.1%	35.7%	38.3%
RESC XII	45%	45%	45.9%
Texas	46.3%	46.9%	48.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-12
HISD, RESC XII, and State LEP Students as a Percentage of Total Student Population
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Hamilton	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%
RESC XII	3%	4%	4.2%
Texas	12.4%	12.8%	13.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

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Compared to its peer districts, HISD is in the middle as far as percentage of economically disadvantaged students and at the low end in percentage of LEP students (**Exhibit 2-13**).

Exhibit 2-13
HISD and Peer District Economically Disadvantaged and LEP Students as a Percentage of Total Student Population
1996-97

District	Economically Disadvantaged Students	LEP Students
Hico	59.5%	11.0%
Cisco	54.1%	0.5%
De Leon	50.6%	2.2%
Clifton	41.6%	7.2%
Hamilton	**38.3%**	**1.9%**
Valley Mills	36.2%	4.0%
Goldthwaite	32.9%	6.7%
Early	28.7%	1.3%
Rio Vista	27.9%	0.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

While HISD enrollment in Career and Technology Education (CATE) programs increased from 1994-95 to 1995-96 to over one-fifth of the student population, enrollment appeared to drop by one half during the next year to only 9 percent (**Exhibit 2-14**). This situation, however, was due to inaccurate information inadvertently submitted to TEA that will be corrected in the coming year. According to recently-filed PEIMS data supplied to the review team by TEA for the 1997-98 school year, 171 HISD students were enrolled in CATE courses, or 18.2 percent of the total enrollment.

Exhibit 2-14
HISD, RESC XII, and State Students Enrolled in CATE Programs as a Percentage of Total Enrollment
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Hamilton	19.1%	**20.6%**	**8.9%**
RESC XII	16%	17%	15.6%
Texas	15.7%	16.9%	17.3%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

HISD compared to its peer districts in CATE programs expenditures is presented in **Exhibit 2-15**.

Exhibit 2-15
HISD and Peer District Students Enrolled in CATE Programs as a Percentage of Total Enrollment
1996-97

District	CATE Students
Valley Mills	34.5%
Clifton	26.4%
De Leon	25.4%
Goldthwaite	25.2%
Rio Vista	23.9%
Cisco	23.1%
Hico	19.8%
Early	19.8%
Hamilton	**8.9%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Among three special populations, HISD had only three students in bilingual/ESL in 1996-97 and was below the regional and state averages in the percentage of students in gifted and talented and above both of them in special education enrollment (**Exhibit 2-16**). The size of the special education population is due to the nine-district cooperative managed by HISD and according to interviews conducted by the review team, the existence of a disproportionate number of residential facilities in the area for children with special education needs.

Exhibit 2-16
HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State Students in Special Programs as a Percentage of Total Enrollment
1996-97

District	Bilingual/ESL	Gifted and Talented	Special Education
Cisco	0.5%	6.9%	21.8%
Clifton	5.5%	10.3%	12.5%
De Leon	2.2%	8.6%	15.7%
Early	1.2%	4.2%	14.3%
Goldthwaite	4.1%	7.7%	23.6%
Hamilton	**0.3%**	**4.3%**	**18.3%**
Hico	10.9%	8.2%	13.6%
Rio Vista	0.6%	7.2%	22.7%
Valley Mills	1.7%	8.1%	15.3%
RESC XII	**3.2%**	**7.4%**	**13.2%**
Texas	**11.7%**	**7.9%**	**11.6%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Student performance on standardized tests, both state and national, is an indicator of the success of the educational delivery system. Since 1990-91 in Texas, the state has administered the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test to measure student performance in reading and math in grades, 3, 4, 5,

6, 7, 8, and 10; in writing in grades 4, 8, and 10; in science and social studies in grade 8; and for end-of-course results for Biology 1 and Algebra 1. TAAS gauges grade-level skills at a passing rate established by the State Board of Education. Schools, districts, regions, and TEA use the results in planning and accountability.

In HISD the percentage of students passing the TAAS test went up in 1995-96 for 3rd graders but went down for 4th and 5th graders. In 1996-97, the percentage passing was up in all areas except 3rd grade reading and 4th grade math (**Exhibit 2-17**).

Exhibit 2-17
Percentage of HISD Elementary Students Passing TAAS
1994-95 through 1996-97

Grade/Subject	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
3rd-Reading	82.1%	**89.4%**	**85.1%**
3rd-Math	74.4%	**83.0%**	91.5%
4th-Reading	84.6%	**77.5%**	93.2%
4th-Writing	88.5%	**82.1%**	88.1%
4th-Math	88.7%	**85.0%**	**83.7%**
5th-Reading	77.4%	**73.6%**	86.8%
5th-Math	84.9%	**71.7%**	75.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

The percentage of HISD elementary students passing TAAS is above state and regional averages in all grades and subjects except 5th-grade math. Compared to its peer districts, HISD is near the top in 3rd-grade math and 4th-grade reading, at the bottom in 5th-grade math, and in the middle in the remaining areas (**Exhibit 2-18**).

Exhibit 2-18
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and
State Elementary Students Passing TAAS
1996-97

District	3rd-grade Reading	3rd-grade Math	4th-grade Reading	4th-grade Writing	4th-grade Math	5th-grade Reading	5th-grade Math
Cisco	97.4%	97.4%	74.5%	84.0%	84.0%	94.0%	94.0%
Clifton	90.6%	87.7%	78.6%	92.5%	87.5%	89.3%	98.7%
De Leon	89.1%	87.0%	71.7%	88.2%	79.2%	95.2%	96.8%
Early	92.6%	96.3%	98.8%	95.2%	91.8%	95.9%	100.0%
Goldthwaite	78.4%	86.5%	94.7%	97.4%	91.9%	93.8%	100.0%
Hamilton	**85.1%**	**91.5%**	**93.2%**	**88.1%**	**83.7%**	**86.8%**	**75.0%**
Hico	77.8%	89.3%	86.8%	78.9%	92.7%	100.0%	90.6%
Rio Vista	76.7%	76.7%	85.2%	72.5%	75.9%	94.3%	94.3%
Valley Mills	69.6%	75.0%	92.3%	92.3%	80.8%	85.7%	90.5%
RESC XII	**80.5%**	**81.1%**	**80.3%**	**85.0%**	**81.6%**	**83.7%**	**85.0%**
Texas	**81.5%**	**81.7%**	**82.5%**	**87.1%**	**82.6%**	**84.8%**	**86.2%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

At the junior high and high school levels, the percentage of students passing the TAAS test has fluctuated (**Exhibit 2-19**).

Exhibit 2-19
Percentage of HISD Junior High and High School Students Passing TAAS
1994-95 through 1996-97

Grade/Subject	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
6th-Reading	85.4%	94.4%	93.0%
6th-Math	78.7%	96.3%	87.9%
7th-Reading	98.0%	88.2%	94.9%
7th-Math	94.1%	77.4%	93.3%
8th-Reading	96.3%	98.1%	89.3%
8th-Writing	92.3%	98.1%	89.1%
8th-Math	77.8%	94.2%	81.8%
8th-Science	100.0%	98.1%	94.4%
8th-Social Studies	88.5%	98.1%	75.0%
10th-Reading	93.5%	86.7%	91.2%
10th-Writing	100.0%	94.5%	97.1%
10th-Math	76.6%	78.0%	85.3%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97

At the 6th through 10th grade levels on TAAS, HISD student performance exceeded that of the region and the state in all areas (**Exhibit 2-20**). Among its peer districts, HISD is comparable in all subject areas and at all grade levels.

Exhibit 2-20
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State
Junior High and High School Students Passing TAAS
Grades 6 and 7
1996-97

District	6th-grade Reading	6th-grade Math	7th-grade Reading	7th-grade Math
Cisco	93.3%	93.2%	97.9%	95.9%
Clifton	87.1%	91.9%	77.0%	86.7%
De Leon	80.7%	98.2%	97.6%	95.2%
Early	92.4%	94.0%	97.9%	96.9%
Goldthwaite	100%	96.0%	96.6%	93.1%
Hamilton	***93.0%***	***87.9%***	***94.9%***	***93.3%***
Hico	97.4%	97.3%	87.2%	94.7%
Rio Vista	94.7%	89.7%	88.4%	88.4%
Valley Mills	100%	96.9%	93.8%	93.9%
RESC XII	84.0%	80.4%	85.2%	80.0%
Texas	84.5%	81.8%	84.5%	79.7%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-1997.

Exhibit 2-20
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State
Junior High and High School Students Passing TAAS
Grades 8 and 10
1996-97

District	8th-grade Reading	8th-grade Writing	8th-grade Math	8th-grade Science	8th-grade Social Studies	10th-grade Reading	10th-grade Writing	10th grade Math
Cisco	91.8%	89.7%	86.7%	96.7%	81.4%	90.2%	95.7%	78.7%
Clifton	93.8%	98.4%	98.5%	98.5%	76.6%	86.5%	90.4%	68.9%
De Leon	87.2%	85.7%	84.6%	89.5%	81.6%	100%	100%	96.9%
Early	98.5%	98.6%	88.4%	97.1%	89.9%	96.4%	100%	89.1%
Goldthwaite	87.9%	93.9%	93.9%	97.0%	81.8%	96.8%	93.3%	80.6%
Hamilton	***89.3%***	***89.1%***	***81.8%***	***94.4%***	***75.0%***	***91.2%***	***97.1%***	***85.3%***
Hico	95.1%	95.2%	95.1%	95.1%	90.2%	84.6%	94.6%	76.9%
Rio Vista	90.6%	90.0%	77.4%	90.4%	69.8%	86.3%	90.2%	84.3%
Valley Mills	83.9%	83.9%	87.1%	100%	81.3%	94.1%	94.1%	79.4%
RESC XII	84.7%	81.1%	78.0%	86.1%	69.7%	86.3%	89.5%	72.5%
Texas	83.9%	80.7%	76.3%	84.6%	67.4%	86.1%	88.5%	72.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-1997.

At all grade levels, HISD student performance on the TAAS is comparable to most of its peer districts. In all areas, student performance exceeds the averages for both RESC XII and the state (**Exhibit 2-21**). HISD was the only district among the peer group in which every 1997 graduate passed the exit level TAAS exam.

Exhibit 2-21
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State Students Passing TAAS,
Sum of Grades 3-8, 10th Grade, and Exit Level
1996-97

	Percentage Passing TAAS				
District	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Math**	**All Tests**	**Exit Level**
Early	96.2%	97.6%	94.2%	**91.7%**	93.7%
Goldthwaite	92.0%	95.1%	91.6%	**87.2%**	95.2%
Hico	89.7%	89.9%	91.0%	**84.2%**	94.1%
Cisco	91.1%	89.7%	89.8%	**83.4%**	98.0%
De Leon	87.9%	90.7%	91.2%	**83.4%**	92.7%
Hamilton	**90.7%**	**90.8%**	**86.2%**	**82.0%**	**100.0%**
Clifton	86.0%	93.7%	88.4%	**81.4%**	94.3%
Valley Mills	89.5%	90.1%	86.6%	**80.8%**	92.1%
Rio Vista	87.9%	84.2%	83.6%	**75.6%**	91.1%
Texas	**84.0%**	**85.3%**	**80.1%**	**73.2%**	**86.6%**
RESC XII	**83.5%**	**85.0%**	**79.9%**	**72.5%**	**87.0%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-1997.

HISD students' mean SAT I score has increased 33.9 percent between 1995 and 1996, easily surpassing regional and state mean SAT I scores each of the past two years (**Exhibit 2-22**). However, since HISD is not a testing site for the SAT, the number of students taking the test is very low: only 4

students in the class of 1996 took the exam, and only 6 students in the class of 1995 took the exam. Data were not available for 1993-94.

Exhibit 2-22
Mean SAT I Score for HISD, RESC XII, and the State
Classes of 1994 through 1996

Entity	Class of 1994	Class of 1995	Class of 1996	Percentage Increase
Hamilton	N/A	**968**	**1296**	**33.9%**
RESC XII	887	885	987	10.9%
Texas	885	891	993	12.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 and 1996-97.

HISD is a testing site for the ACT, and for the classes of 1995 and 1996, 43 and 42 students, respectively took the test. The students' mean ACT score also has surpassed that of the region and the state, increasing by an average of 7.7 percent over the past three years while neither the region nor the state averages have increased (**Exhibit 2-23**).

Exhibit 2-23
Mean ACT Score for HISD, RESC XII, and the State
Classes of 1994 through 1996

Entity	Class of 1994	Class of 1995	Class of 1996	Percentage Increase
Hamilton	20.7	**21.6**	**22.3**	**7.7%**
RESC XII	20.1	20.1	20.1	0%
Texas	20.1	20.0	20.1	0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1995-96 and 1996-97.

Compared to its peer districts, HISD students had the highest mean SAT I score and the second highest mean ACT score. A greater percentage of HISD students took one or both of these tests than in any of the peer districts, and a greater percentage of HISD students achieved at or above the criterion level than in any of the peer districts (**Exhibit 2-24**).

Exhibit 2-24
Mean SAT I and ACT Score for HISD, Peer Districts, RESC XII, and the State
Class of 1996

District	Percentage Tested	At or Above Criterion	Mean SAT I Score	Mean ACT Score
Hamilton	**93.6%**	**40.9%**	**1296**	**22.3**
Goldthwaite	90.3%	28.6%	1106	20.0
Valley Mills	72.7%	37.5%	1036	21.4
Cisco	45.8%	22.7%	1028	21.3
Clifton	86.4%	27.5%	1007	20.3
Early	86.8%	30.4%	995	**22.6**
Texas	**64.7%**	**26.3%**	**993**	**20.1**
RESC XII	**68.5%**	**24.2%**	**987**	**20.1**
De Leon	65.5%	10.5%	913	20.3
Rio Vista	64.5%	15.0%	904	19.1
Hico	85.7%	5.6%	N/A	18.7

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-1997.

Another measure of the educational delivery system is the results of advanced placement tests for college credit. Since 1994-95, HISD has increased the number of courses available for advanced placement testing and the number of students taking advanced placement tests has almost doubled (**Exhibit 2-25**).

Exhibit 2-25
HISD Advanced Placement Tests and Number of Students Taking the Tests
1994-95 through 1996-97

	Number of students taking advanced placement test		
Course	**1994-95**	**1995-96**	**1996-97**
English Literature	9	3	12
English Language	0	11	2
Computer Science	3	6	0
Statistics	0	0	3
Calculus AB	9	11	4
Total number of unduplicated students taking advanced placement tests	**9**	**16**	**16**

Source: High school principal, HISD.

As noted in **Exhibit 2-26**, HISD had a greater percentage of students taking advanced placement tests than any of its peer districts, the regional average, or the state average.

Exhibit 2-26
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII,
and State Students Taking Advanced Placement Tests
1996-97

District	Percentage Taking Advanced Placement Tests	Percentage of Scores At or Above "3"
Hamilton	**16.7%**	**76.2%**
Texas	**8.5%**	**58.7%**
Early	15.8%	57.9%
RESC XII	**4.1%**	**53.8%**
Rio Vista	7.1%	33.3%
Hico	3.8%	N/A
Clifton	1.4%	N/A
Valley Mills	13.3%	0%
Goldthwaite	0%	0%
Cisco	0%	0%
De Leon	0%	0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-1997.

Additional measures of the effectiveness of the educational delivery system include student attendance and the number of students who drop out of school. **Exhibit 2-27** shows the attendance and drop out rates of HISD versus the averages of its peer districts, the region, and the state. HISD has an attendance rate near the top of its peer districts, but interviews with teachers and the chairs of the site-

based decision-making committees indicated that the same students are regularly truant and that the principal had not called meetings of the attendance committee in over a year.

Exhibit 2-27
Attendance and Dropout Rates of HISD Students
Compared to Peer Districts, RESC XII, and State
1995-96

District	Attendance Rate	Dropout Rate
Early	97.1%	0.9%
Goldthwaite	96.8%	0.3%
De Leon	96.5%	0.3%
Clifton	96.4%	0.5%
Hamilton	**96.2%**	**1.5%**
Rio Vista	96.2%	0.5%
Valley Mills	96.1%	0.7%
Hico	95.8%	1.0%
Cisco	95.6%	1.3%
RESC XII	**95.5%**	**1.3%**
Texas	**95.1%**	**1.8%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1993-94 through 1995-96.

HISD's dropout rate is the highest among its peer districts and above the regional average. Only the state dropout rate is higher. However, HISD and its peer districts have so few students, a change of one student from year to year can greatly influence the dropout rate.

Retention rates for students show the percentage of students who start the school year enrolled in the same grade that they were in at the end of the previous school year. Students are only allowed to be retained in a grade through the 8th grade. **Exhibit 2-28** shows that among regular education students, HISD's retention rates are much greater for grades K-4 and 7th grade, equivalent for 6th grade, and less than the region and the state for the 5th and 8th grades. The reason for the high level of retention at grades K-2 is the district's requirement that all students be able to read by the time they reach third grade.

Exhibit 2-28
Regular Education Retention Rates of HISD Compared to RESC XII and the State
1996-97

Grade Level	Hamilton	RESC XII	State
K	**5.2%**	2.4%	1.3%
1	**9.9%**	5.8%	5.4%
2	**6.9%**	2.5%	2.3%
3	**2.1%**	1.1%	1.4%
4	**6.7%**	1.3%	1.0%
5	0%	1.2%	0.6%
6	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
7	**3.5%**	2.6%	2.9%
8	0%	1.5%	1.9%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Among its peer districts, the retention rates (percent of students who were not promoted at the end of a school year) vary greatly (**Exhibit 2-29**). HISD retains a greater percentage of students in the 2nd and 4th grades than its peers, but in the other grades it is either comparable or lower.

Exhibit 2-29
Regular Education Retention Rates of HISD, Peer Districts, RESC XII, and the State
1996-97

District	Kinder-garten	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade
Cisco	6.4%	3.9%	0%	1.9%	0%	1.6%	0%	1.6%	3.6%
Clifton	5.4%	2.6%	2.9%	2.9%	0%	0%	0%	5.5%	0%
De Leon	4.2%	14.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6.7%	2.4%	0%
Early	1.6%	6.4%	1.2%	2.4%	2.6%	8.2%	0%	1.5%	1.3%
Goldthwaite	8.8%	11.1%	2.3%	0%	7.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hamilton	**5.2%**	**9.9%**	**6.9%**	**2.1%**	**6.7%**	**0%**	**1.7%**	**3.5%**	**0%**
Hico	0%	7.5%	0%	0%	5.7%	2.6%	0%	0%	0%
Rio Vista	3.8%	2.3%	0%	2.0%	0%	1.8%	11.9%	4.3%	0%
Valley Mills	3.8%	9.4%	6.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.8%	2.9%
RESC XII	**2.4%**	**5.8%**	**2.5%**	**1.1%**	**1.3%**	**1.2%**	**1.6%**	**2.6%**	**1.5%**
Texas	**1.3%**	**5.4%**	**2.3%**	**1.4%**	**1.0%**	**0.6%**	**1.7%**	**2.9%**	**1.9%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-30 shows the retention rates for special education for the past three years compared to the region and the state. HISD did not retain any special education students in kindergarten, grade 3, or grades 5-8. HISD is at the regional and state averages for students retained at the first grade level and above in both grades 2 and 4.

Exhibit 2-30
Special Education Retention Rates for HISD, RESC XII, and State
1996-97

Grade Level	Hamilton	RESC XII	State
K	0%	9.1%	6.1%
1	10.0%	11.9%	10.5%
2	**20.0%**	6.4%	4.0%
3	0%	4.4%	2.2%
4	**5.6%**	3.1%	1.6%
5	0%	2.6%	1.9%
6	0%	3.1%	2.1%
7	0%	3.1%	3.1%
8	0%	2.6%	3.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-31 shows the percent of special education students retained in HISD, its peer districts, the region, and the state by grade.

Exhibit 2-31
Special Education Retention Rates of HISD, Peer Districts, RESC XII, and the State
1996-97

District	Kinder-garten	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade
Cisco	20.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5.3%	0%
Clifton	11.1%	25.0%	40.0%	0%	5.9%	0%	0%	20.0%	0%
De Leon	0%	25.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9.1%	5.9%	0%
Early	0%	28.6%	9.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5.9%	0%
Goldthwaite	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hamilton	**0%**	**10.0%**	**20.0%**	**0%**	**5.6%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Hico	0%	14.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25.0%	0%	0%
Rio Vista	6.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Valley Mills	0%	0%	0%	10.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
RESC XII	**9.1%**	**11.9%**	**6.4%**	**4.4%**	**3.1%**	**2.6%**	**3.1%**	**3.1%**	**2.6%**
Texas	**6.1%**	**10.5%**	**4.0%**	**2.2%**	**1.6%**	**1.9%**	**2.1%**	**3.1%**	**3.4%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-32 shows the change in the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers in each of HISD's instructional program areas over the past three years.

Exhibit 2-32
Number of HISD Teacher FTEs by Instructional Program
1994-95 through 1996-97

Program	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage Change in FTEs over the Period
Regular education	44.7	46.9	50.7	13%
Special education	7.6	8.1	8.5	12%
Compensatory education	4.4	3.6	3.3	-25%
Career and Technology education	2.9	2.9	3.3	14%
Bilingual/ESL education	0.1	0.0	0.5	400%
Gifted and talented education	1.5	1.5	1.5	0
Other (honor/migrant)	1.6	1.6	2.1	31%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-33 shows that HISD ranks near the bottom of its peer group in the percentage of teachers assigned to the regular education program but at the top in the percentage of teachers assigned to gifted and talented education programs and, in HISD's case, other honors programs. With a small bilingual/ESL student population, HISD, its peer districts, and RESC XII have much lower teacher FTEs assigned to these programs than the state average.

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Exhibit 2-33
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State Teacher FTEs by Instructional Program
1996-97

District	Regular Education	Special Education	Compensatory Education	Career and Technology Education	Bilingual/ ESL Education	Gifted and Talented Education	Other (Honor/ Migrant)
RESC XII	**77.6%**	**8.7%**	**4.8%**	**4.3%**	**1.0%**	**2.0%**	**1.5%**
De Leon	77.1%	10.2%	4.9%	5.2%	1.0%	1.6%	0
Early	77.0%	6.8%	9.4%	4.4%	0.4%	0.8%	1.3%
Hico	76.1%	9.3%	4.2%	5.5%	2.8%	1.2%	0.9%
Cisco	75.8%	7.1%	9.3%	5.4%	0.1%	1.4%	1.0%
Rio Vista	75.6%	16.1%	2.8%	3.1%	0.1%	1.4%	1.0%
Clifton	75.5%	8.3%	4.1%	6.5%	2.4%	1.1%	2.1%
Hamilton	**72.6%**	**12.1%**	**4.7%**	**4.7%**	**0.7%**	**2.1%**	**3.0%**
Valley Mills	72.2%	16.6%	2.3%	5.7%	2.3%	0.5%	0.3%
Texas	**71.6%**	**9.6%**	**4.0%**	**4.0%**	**6.7%**	**2.1%**	**2.0%**
Goldthwaite	63.3%	27.4%	4.2%	4.9%	0.2%	0	0

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-34 shows the percentage of teacher FTEs by years of teaching experience within HISD, its peer districts, RESC XII, and the state. Almost fifty-four percent of HISD's teachers have 11 or more years of experience compared to 47 percent for the region and 49 percent for the state. HISD's teachers with less than five years of experience make up 29.1 percent of total teachers compared to an average of 35.8 percent for the region and 33.4 percent for the state). Peer districts range from a low of 20.7 percent in De Leon with five or fewer years of experience to 43.8 percent in Rio Vista.

Exhibit 2-34
Percentage of HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State Teacher FTEs by Years of Experience
1996-97

District	Beginning Teachers	1-5 Years Experience	6-10 Years Experience	11-20 Years Experience	Over 20 Years Experience
Cisco	5.5%	24.6%	22.0%	30.2%	17.7%
Clifton	10.7%	28.9%	16.6%	23.5%	20.3%
De Leon	1.6%	19.1%	25.1%	31.8%	22.5%
Early	3.4%	20.5%	20.5%	36.2%	19.5%
Goldthwaite	5.1%	25.7%	18.8%	23.0%	27.4%
Hamilton	**4.3%**	**24.8%**	**17.2%**	**29.4%**	**24.3%**
Hico	2.0%	22.5%	32.9%	23.6%	19.0%
Rio Vista	5.6%	38.2%	23.6%	25.0%	7.7%
Valley Mills	14.1%	11.7%	14.0%	42.4%	17.8%
RESC XII	**7.8%**	**28.0%**	**17.5%**	**27.8%**	**19.0%**
Texas	**6.6%**	**26.8%**	**17.4%**	**29.6%**	**19.5%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Even though HISD has been hiring teachers with less experience, the average years of experience among HISD teachers has increased by 10 percent over the past three years (**Exhibit 2-35**).

Exhibit 2-35
HISD, RESC XII, and State Average Years of Teaching Experience
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Change over the Period
Hamilton	11.9	12.2	**13.1**	**10.1%**
RESC XII	11.0	11.1	11.5	4.5%
Texas	11.5	11.7	11.7	1.7%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97

Teachers in HISD average 13.1 years of experience, including 6.9 years of experience within HISD. Compared to its peer districts, HISD teachers are among the most experienced, but almost one-half of the total experience is outside of HISD (**Exhibit 2-36**). Teacher interviews and survey responses indicated that many of the teachers come to HISD to return home or near the area where they were raised.

Exhibit 2-36
HISD and Peer District Teacher Average Years of Experience
1996-97

District	Teacher Experience - Total Years	Teacher Experience - Years Within the District
De Leon	14.6	9.2
Early	14.0	7.5
Hamilton	**13.1**	**6.9**
Goldthwaite	12.8	6.6
Valley Mills	12.0	6.3
Cisco	11.7	7.8
Texas	**11.7**	**8.0**
Hico	11.6	6.9
RESC XII	**11.5**	**7.1**
Clifton	11.4	5.8
Rio Vista	8.3	4.0

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

The student-teacher ratio in HISD has been less than the regional and state averages for each of the past three years (**Exhibit 2-37**). The rate of change in the class size has also been increasing at a faster rate than either the region or the state.

Exhibit 2-37
HISD, RESC XII, and State Student-Teacher Ratio
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Change over the Period
Hamilton	14.0	14.4	**13.5**	**-3.6%**
RESC XII	15.0	14.8	14.5	-3.3%
Texas	15.7	15.6	15.5	-1.3%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Even though HISD's student-teacher ratio has been decreasing, it trails all but one of its peer districts (**Exhibit 2-38**).

Exhibit 2-38
HISD, Peer District, RESC XII,
and State Student-Teacher Ratio
1996-97

District	Student-Teacher Ratio
Goldthwaite	11.0
Valley Mills	11.0
Rio Vista	12.2
De Leon	12.4
Hico	12.4
Clifton	12.9
Cisco	13.0
Hamilton	**13.5**
Early	13.9
RESC XII	**14.5**
Texas	**15.5**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Over the past three years there has also been a decrease in the elementary class size (**Exhibit 2-39**). Overall, HISD's class size has decreased at 20 times the rate of the region and five times the rate of the state, and now HISD's class size is lower than the averages for the region or the state.

Exhibit 2-39
HISD, RESC XII, and State Elementary School Class Size
1994-95 through 1996-97

Entity	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Change over the Period
Hamilton	20.9	20.5	**18.6**	**-11.0%**
RESC XII	19.6	19.7	19.5	-0.5%
Texas	20.2	20.0	19.8	-2.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Compared with its peer districts, HISD is about in the middle (**Exhibit 2-40**). Cisco has an average elementary class size of 16 students while Valley Mills has an average size of 21.2 students.

Exhibit 2-40
HISD, Peer District, RESC XII, and State
Average Elementary School Class Size
1996-97

District	Average Elementary School Class Size
Cisco	16.0
Goldthwaite	16.9
Rio Vista	17.2
De Leon	17.4
Hico	18.4
Hamilton	**18.6**
Clifton	19.2
RESC XII	**19.5**
Texas	**19.8**
Early	20.6
Valley Mills	21.2

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

While the elementary class sizes have fallen dramatically, all secondary class sizes have increased (**Exhibit 2-41**).

Exhibit 2-41
HISD Secondary School Class Size
1994-95 through 1996-97

Subject	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Change over the Period
English	16.1	17.5	19.8	**23.0%**
Foreign language	16.1	17.9	20.5	**27.3%**
Math	14.3	12.9	14.8	3.5%
Science	17.5	17.5	18.5	5.7%
Social studies	17.1	19.3	20.4	**19.3%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

Even with the recent increases, HISD's secondary classes are smaller than the state and the regional averages in math, science, and social studies.
(**Exhibit 2-42**).

Exhibit 2-42
HISD, RESC XII, and State Secondary School Class Size
1996-97

Subject	Hamilton	RESC XII	Texas
English	**19.8**	19.6	20.9
Foreign language	**20.5**	19.6	21.5
Math	14.8	18.8	20.8
Science	18.5	20.6	21.8
Social studies	20.4	21.4	22.7

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Compared to its peer districts, HISD' Secondary school classes are larger in English, foreign language, and social studies and somewhat smaller in math and science. (**Exhibit 2-43**).

Exhibit 2-43
HISD, Peer District, RESC XII,
and State Secondary School Class Size
1996-97

District	English	Foreign Language	Math	Science	Social Studies
Cisco	16.4	12.7	13.8	19.3	20.0
Clifton	15.4	18.3	15.9	16.7	18.3
De Leon	16.9	19.0	15.6	16.5	17.4
Early	15.4	14.0	12.8	16.1	16.6
Goldthwaite	12.8	18.3	8.4	13.9	15.1
Hamilton	**19.8**	**20.5**	**14.8**	**18.5**	**20.4**
Hico	16.5	16.0	17.9	24.3	17.5
Rio Vista	18.8	14.7	21.2	21.1	17.2
Valley Mills	29.3	32.3	24.6	26.0	30.3
RESC XII	**19.6**	**19.6**	**18.8**	**20.6**	**21.4**
Texas	**20.9**	**21.5**	**20.8**	**21.8**	**22.7**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

BACKGROUND

Every school district tries to prepare students for additional education after high school. Almost 65 percent of Texas high school graduates take the major college admissions tests, the SAT and ACT. Nationally, about 41 percent of high school graduates took the SAT, and about 37 percent took the ACT. In 1996, the last year for which data are available, more than 125,000 Texas students, slightly less than two-thirds of those eligible to take either exam, took either the SAT, the ACT, or both. Of those students taking one or both of the tests, 26.3 percent, or just over 30,000, scored at or above the accountability criterion score established by the State Board of Education (SBOE) of 1,000 on the SAT and 24 on the ACT.

FINDING

In general, HISD students are performing well, as evidenced by SAT and ACT scores, TAAS achievement test results, and advanced placement test results. At the tenth grade level on TAAS, HISD student performance exceeded that of the region and state in both reading and math (**Exhibit 2-44**). HISD students easily surpassed regional and state average SAT and ACT scores each of the past two years (**Exhibit 2-45**). HISD also has had a greater percentage of students taking advanced courses than the regional or state averages (**Exhibit 2-46**). The student attendance rate is high for HISD students, and the dropout rate, while high among its peers, is below the state average (**Exhibit 2-47**). Approximately 85 percent of the student population participate in at least one extra- or co-curricular activity, such as band, sports, drama, and debate.

Students in HISD take the SAT and the ACT in higher numbers than either the region or the state (**Exhibit 2-44**). For the graduating classes from 1994 to 1996, over 90 percent of the graduates took the SAT, the ACT, or both.

Exhibit 2-44
Percentage of HISD, RESC XII, and State
Students Taking the SAT or the ACT Test
Class of 1994 through Class of 1996

Class	Hamilton	RESC XII	Texas
1996	**93.6%**	68.5%	64.7%
1995	**91.5%**	64.7%	64.8%
1994	**91.9%**	63.6%	64.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

For the class of 1996, the mean SAT score of 1,296 was the highest among HISD's peer districts, and the ACT mean score of 22.3 was second only to Early's 22.6 mean score. The averages for the state were 993 on the SAT and 20.1 on the ACT, and the averages for RESC XII were 987 and 20.1, respectively.

The number of students scoring at or above the SBOE-established accountability criterion score has risen from 27 percent for the graduating class of 1994 to 40.9 percent for the graduating class of 1996 (**Exhibit 2-45**).

Exhibit 2-45
Percentage of HISD, RESC XII, and State Students
Scoring At or Above the SAT/ACT Criterion Accountability Score
Class of 1994 through Class of 1996

Class	Hamilton	RESC XII	Texas
1996	**40.9%**	24.2%	26.3%
1995	**25.5%**	16.1%	18.0%
1994	**27.0%**	16.5%	17.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

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HISD also has increased the number of subjects in which a student can take an advanced placement test and has had a greater percentage of students taking advanced placement tests than any of its peer districts, the regional average, or the state average. Over the past three years, the percentage of HISD students taking advanced placement tests has increased from 13.5 percent of all students to 16.7 percent.

Most colleges and universities award credit based upon advanced placement exam scores of "3" or higher. The percentage of HISD students taking advanced placement tests and receiving a score "3" or higher has increased to 76.2 percent in 1996-97 from 62 percent in 1994-95. In 1996-97, over three-fourths of the HISD students taking advanced placement tests received a score of "3" or higher compared to three-fifths of the students statewide and just above one-half the students in Region XII (**Exhibit 2-46**).

Exhibit 2-46
Percentage of HISD, RESC XII, and State Students
Taking Advanced Placement Tests and Scoring At or Above "3"
1994-95 through 1996-97

Year	Hamilton	RESC XII	Texas
1996-97	**76.2%**	53.8%	58.7%
1995-96	**67.8%**	45.1%	60.6%
1994-95	**62.0%**	43.0%	60.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97.

COMMENDATION

HISD students perform well on national standardized tests and advanced placement exams.

B. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

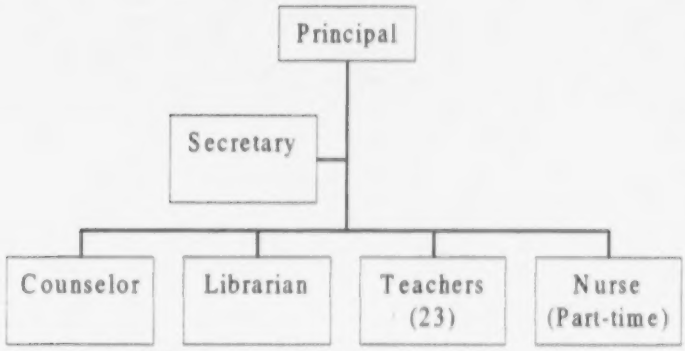
The superintendent is the primary instructional leader in the Hamilton school district. He is assisted by the principals in developing the curriculum, evaluating the curriculum and the mix of programs offered, and making changes to the curriculum as needed. Periodically, the district conducts a review of the curriculum at all levels, called sequencing, to make sure that the necessary subjects and skills are being taught at each grade level to ensure that each student is prepared for the next grade level. HISD conducted a sequencing review in 1996-97.

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD's elementary and junior high school and high school are located in one building that is approximately 30 years old. In 1996-97, an additional building, the early childhood center, was constructed as a joint project with the special education cooperative. This new building houses four HISD pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms.

The HISD high school is at the south end of the facility that also houses the elementary/junior high school. The high school has an enrollment, as of March 30, 1998, of 251 students and is staffed by a principal, a counselor, a librarian, a secretary, a nurse (who also serves the elementary/junior high school), and 23 teachers (**Exhibit 2-47**).

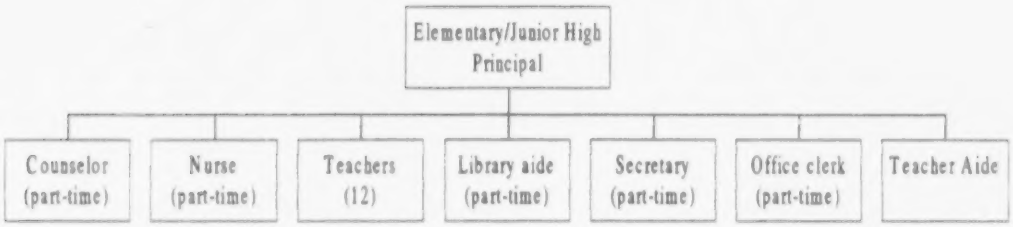
Exhibit 2-47
HISD High School Organization
1996-97



Source: HISD.

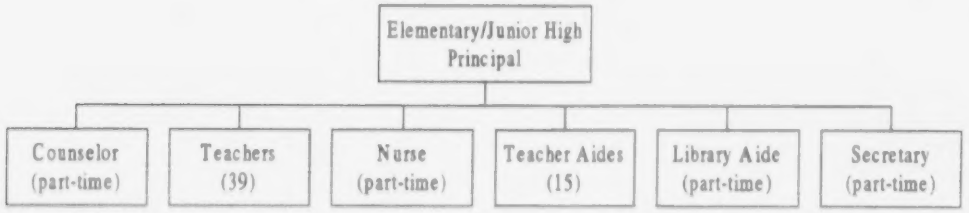
The elementary/junior high school has an enrollment, as of March 30, 1998, of 687 students of which 478 are in early childhood through grade 5 and 209 are in grades 6-8. The two grade levels share staff. The principal oversees all grade levels and a counselor, nurse, library aide, secretary, and office clerk support both the elementary and junior high grade levels. There are 11 regular education teachers in the junior high grades and 29 in the elementary. There are also two instructional aides at the elementary level. (**Exhibits 2-47 and 2-48**). Since enrollment has grown by about 10 percent per year over the past three years, the school has become more crowded, creating the need for larger classes.

Exhibit 2-48
HISD Junior High School Organization
1996-97



Source: HISD.

Exhibit 2-49
HISD Elementary School Organization
1996-97



Source: HISD.

FINDING

The federal government provides funding to school districts for targeted purposes through various programs or Titles. Title I, Part A, for helping disadvantaged children at risk of failure meet high standards, and Title VI, for innovative education program strategies, were first authorized in 1965 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which has been amended on several occasions and was last reauthorized in October 1994.

HISD receives funds for programs under both Title I and Title VI. For 1997-98, HISD will receive $114,162 in Title I funds and $3,269 in Title VI funds. HISD uses the Title VI funds for library books. This use of the funds is similar to many school districts that do not receive much money.

The Title I funds are used to support the Creative Educational Institute (CEI) remedial reading lab which is used by students from grades 1-5 who are either slow readers, dyslexic, or who are not succeeding in reading but do not qualify for resource instruction in special education. The lab uses software from CEI called Essential Learning Systems. Title I funds pay for the salaries of two teachers and three aides who work in the lab, various supplies, and a four-week summer reading program for these same students.

COMMENDATION

HISD makes efficient use of the limited federal resources available for students at risk of failure.

FINDING

Based upon interviews, survey responses, and community input during the community forum and focus group meetings, the scope of the elementary/junior high school principal's overall workload and the responsibilities of coordinating the activities of both elementary and junior high grades is difficult. In addition to spending long hours participating in numerous Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings for special education students, the principal is expected to handle discipline, all administrative matters for the school, and still address the day-to-day instructional needs of students, teachers, and support staff.

While the current principal is dedicated, and spends longs hours at the school, it is difficult, if not impossible, for one individual to physically perform all of these activities. Based upon the staffing model for small school districts developed by the Texas Association of Rural Schools, an assistant principal is necessary at an elementary school with 650 students.

Recommendation 11:

Add a full-time assistant principal at the elementary/junior high school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent reviews the responsibilities of the principal's position and develops a position description for the new position.	September 1998
2.	The superintendent reviews the position description with the principal and incorporates appropriate modifications.	October 1998
3.	The superintendent posts the position and advertises in appropriate publications.	November - December 1998
4.	The superintendent recommends a candidate to the board for approval.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Since there is no current comparable position, the new position is estimated at $35,000 plus an additional 15 percent for benefits, or a total of $40,250 annually.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Add an assistant principal at the elementary/junior high school	($40,250)	($40,250)	($40,250)	($40,250)	($40,250)

C. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

FINDING

HISD conducts staff development programs for teachers as part of the inservice training prior to the beginning of the school year and throughout the year. Staff development days are scheduled at the beginning of the year, and all teachers, regardless of grade level, take the same staff development courses at the same time. Staff development offerings are developed by the former superintendent and the principals with review by the site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees. For 1998-99, the SBDM committees are soliciting input from the teachers and will make recommendations.

Staff development offered to teachers during the 1997-98 year is identified in **Exhibit 2-50**.

Exhibit 2-50
HISD Staff Development
1997-98

Course	Date Offered
Professional Development Appraisal System	August 7, 1997
Vertical Teaming with Curriculum	August 8, 1997
Nature and Need of Learners (GT)	August 8, 1997
Social and Emotional Needs of Learners (GT)	August 22, 1997
Nature and Need of Learners (GT)	August 29, 1997
Curriculum Differentiation (GT)	September 15, 1997
Creativity and Instructional Strategies (GT)	October 20, 1997
Technology Training	February 6, 1998
Identification and Assessment (GT)	February 23, 1998

Source: HISD.

Due to recent changes in the Texas Education Code associated with the Gifted and Talented (GT) programs in school districts, thirty hours of training will be required for teachers beginning with the 1998-99 year. HISD chose to give this training to all teachers during 1997-98.

In the written survey conducted of HISD teachers, as part of this review, they were asked to "grade the efficiency and effectiveness" of 11 districtwide functions and to grade the district overall. Teachers rated staff development as the third lowest-ranking function within HISD, just above food service and custodial operations (**Exhibit 2-51**).

Exhibit 2-51
Ranking of HISD Functions by HISD Teachers

Function	Grade
Instruction	4.82
Transportation	4.71
Maintenance	4.39
Personnel	4.24
Purchasing	4.21
HISD overall	***4.18***
Planning and budgeting	4.16
Finance	4.05
Technology	4.03
Staff development	**4.00**
Food service	3.87
Custodial operations	3.71

Source: Survey conducted by WCL ENTERPRISES, March 1998.
Note: Grades were based on 5 points for an "A", 4 points for a "B", etc.

Included in the survey responses were comments regarding the lack of differentiation in staff development by grade level, the limited range of offerings, and the use of part of the staff development days for administrative or other matters, such as scheduling, handling of early dismissal, testing programs, and preparation for TAAS. The teachers indicated that this takes away time that is supposed

to concentrate on program or curriculum issues. In 1996-97, the district allocated $5,200 for staff development. That amount was raised to $6,900 for 1997-98.

Interviews with representatives from RESC XII, where HISD is a member district, indicated that HISD teachers seldom participate in staff development offerings. Some district employees indicated that the distance of nearly 75 miles was an issue, while administrators said the RESC XII training often did not meet the needs of the district.

Recommendation 12:

Develop structured staff development offerings that directly support district goals and objectives.

Training should support objectives set out in the district's improvement plans. SBDM should recommend staff development offerings prior to the beginning of the school year based upon input solicited from teachers, input from the principals based upon teacher evaluations and areas of weakness. Grade-level differences should be recognized and incorporated into the plan. In addition, the district needs to carefully evaluate what is available through RESC XII and work with them to provide useful training to district employees.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent works with SBDM committees to solicit ideas/needs for staff development from teachers by grade level.	April - May 1999
2.	Principals supply the SBDM committees with recommended staff development needs based upon results of annual teacher evaluations	May 1999
3.	The SBDM committees solicit information from RESC XII regarding probable course offerings and locations for the 1999-2000 school year.	April - May 1999
4.	The SBDM committees review the recommendations from all sources and recommend a staff development plan to the principals and former superintendent.	July 1999
5.	The principals schedule staff development days within the district and identify alternative staff development opportunities offered through RESC XII.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The costs for RESC XII training are usually nominal and many training sessions are free to member districts. By making better use of RESC XII, training should be accommodated within the district's current staff development budget. However, the district must target specific types of courses that support achievement of district objectives and work more directly with RESC XII so that training meets teachers' needs.

D. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

CURRENT SITUATION

The curriculum of the elementary and junior high schools is driven by four basic programs: in reading, Accelerated Reader; in math, Saxon math; in phonics, Saxon phonics; and in English, the Shurley Method. Each of these are very specific curricula and stress consistency and continuity from grades 1 through 8.

The learning objectives at the elementary school are detailed in **Exhibit 2-52**. At the junior high level, TAAS performance has been reviewed by discipline, and each discipline has identified target areas for emphasis (**Exhibit 2-53**).

Exhibit 2-52
HISD Elementary School Learning Objectives by Grade Level

Grade	Learning Objectives
First	Saxon phonics
	Saxon math
	Reading instruction from Basal readers
	The Shurley Method
	Fine Arts TEKS
	TEKS for English language arts (ELA)
Second	TAAS analysis
	Reading analysis
	Math analysis
	Writing analysis
Third	Math target areas and objectives
	Instructional targets for ELA
	Science
	Social studies
Fourth	ELA
	Grade level analysis for ELA
	Reading
	Math
Title I	Coordination of curricular areas

Source: Principal, elementary/junior high school, HISD.

Exhibit 2-53
HISD Junior High School Target Areas

Subject	Target Areas
Language arts	Writing in various methods: informative, persuasive, and classificatory
	Summarization of main ideas
	Encourage Accelerated Readers
Math - grades 6-8	Use the operation of division to solve problems
	Determine solution strategies and analyze/solve problems
Math - grades 6-7	Evaluate reasonableness of a solution to a problem situation
Math - grade 6	Estimate solutions to a problem situation
Science	Need to read and construct graphs and tables
	Ability to interpret information in graphs and tables
	Extension information to make inferences or conclusions
Social studies	Understanding concepts: American and other economic systems American and other political systems Sociological and cultural factors
	Evaluating concepts: Generalizations/draw inferences, conclusions Use problem/decision-making skills

Source: Principal, elementary/junior high school, HISD.

FINDING

In interviews and survey responses, elementary/junior high school teachers expressed concern about the consistency and continuity of the curriculum from grade one through high school. Even though a sequencing review had been completed the previous year, there was concern that there were still "gaps" that had not been fully addressed, especially in key subjects such as science.

Elementary/junior high teachers also indicated that they do not understand the role of the site-based decision-making committee (SBDM) as it relates to the principal and the carrying forward of recommendations to the former superintendent and board of trustees.

High school teachers expressed concern over where and with whom the responsibility resides for evaluating the curriculum or making changes to the curriculum. They indicated that there is no review of the current curriculum and that changes need to occur in the career and technology programs. Interviews by the review team with the high school principal indicated that the process of curriculum review and evaluation was "informal" at best.

Interviews with board members indicated that they do not think that the academic areas are well organized making it difficult to determine student and program needs. Unlike the athletic functions, budget presentations in the academic areas are not tied to performance goals or measures making it difficult for board members to determine priorities.

According to representatives from RESC XII, a consortium of 15 regional service centers has developed new software, TEKSSTAR, to assist districts in the development and evaluation of curricula. The software assists in designing lesson plans in the 4 foundation areas of Texas Education Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the minimum knowledge and skills that students should possess at each grade level.

According to the former superintendent, the district has discussed the possibility of adding a director of curriculum and instruction position but has not done so due to funding constraints. Based upon discussions with the executive director of the Texas Association of Rural Schools, addition of this type of position may not be as effective as using existing teacher resources to evaluate and modify the curriculum on an on-going basis.

Recommendation 13:

Evaluate the curriculum during the summer and recommend modifications to the former superintendent prior to the 1999-2000 school year.

A group of HISD teachers should establish annual student performance objectives in each program area. These objectives should reflect district goals and should be formulated into annual objectives that are directly tied to budget allocations. Each annual objective should include a way to evaluate progress and results. This plan should be reviewed annually during the summer by a working group of teachers, reviewed by the site-based decision-making committees at each campus and at the district level prior to the adoption of any changes, and formally approved by the board.

HISD can purchase the TEKSSTAR software through RESC XII for $1,400. Use of the software should facilitate the work of the teachers and provide an ongoing resource to the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, with input from the principals, selects a group of teachers representing all grade levels and key subject areas to participate on the committee.	May 1999
2.	The committee meets, evaluates the existing curriculum, and makes recommendations for changes.	June - July 1999
3.	The superintendent and the principals review the recommendations and present them to the SBDM committees for review and approval.	July 1999
4.	The superintendent presents to the board for formal approval..	August 1999
5.	The principals implement the recommendations.	On-going

FISCAL IMPACT

A one-time cost of $1,400 for the TEKSSTAR software is included in FY 1999. Additional stipends will be paid to ten teachers for teachers working one month (160 hours) at $15 per hour for the first year and 5 teachers for the same period of time for years 2 through 5.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Evaluate the curriculum during the summer months	($16,400)	($7,500)	($7,500)	($7,500)	($7,500)

E. CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

FINDING

HISD has strong co-curricular and extracurricular programs. HISD's band program is the largest in 2A school districts in Texas. During the past several years the band has traveled throughout the United States for presentations and turns out all-state band members on a regular basis.

At the high school level, the Future Homemakers of America (FHA) chapter has 34 members. The chapter had two STAR (Students Taking Action for Recognition) teams compete at the region and state meets, the Entrepreneurship team placed 1st in region and 2nd in state, and the Focus on Children team placed 4th in region and 6th in state.

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter has 103 members in the high school and 38 members in the junior high school. During 1997-98, the chapter participated in four livestock shows, seven leadership development events, and seven career development events. The Senior FFA Skills and Agricultural Issues teams advanced to the Area IV leadership development contest, and the Range and Pasture, Dairy Cattle, and Meats Judging teams all advanced to state competition.

The athletic program is also strong. In March 1998, the girls' basketball team won the 2A state championship. In the past several years, the girls' golf team won the 2A championship and the boys' golf teams have won two state 2A championships.

HISD is also in the process of building a University Interscholastic League (UIL) academic program. During the past year, a series of goals and objectives for UIL academics were established. According to a presentation delivered by the former superintendent to the board, over 70 students have participated in various UIL academic events during the year, which is double the 34 students who participated the prior year. The academic team won its first ever district championship. Nineteen students advanced to regional, 9 advanced to state, and 8 returned with gold medals, with one of those 8 in 1st place.

Recently, the district announced that of the 66 students graduating in 1998, 21 students, or nearly one-third of all graduates, have received gold medals for state championship performances in events including Texas Math and Science Coaches Association (TMSCA) Calculator, UIL Computer Science, Association of Texas Small School Bands (ATSSB) All-State Band, UIL Solo/Ensemble, girls' basketball, boys' golf, and girls' golf.

At the elementary/junior high school level over the past two years, several students have won national awards in "Invent America!", one student won a state championship in Future Problem Solving, the 5th-6th and 7th-8th grade calculator teams won TMSCA championships, and two individuals were selected for the all-district junior high school band. In sports, the girls' 8th grade basketball team won the Gatesville tournament, the 7th and 8th grade boys' teams in football won district championships, and the 7th grade boys' basketball team went undefeated.

COMMENDATION

HISD has a strong program of extra- and co-curricular activities that provide students with a wide range of alternatives in which to participate.

FINDING

The band director has been with HISD for 12 years. When he started at HISD, less than 25 students, including 8th graders, were involved in the program. The band director indicated that approximately 125 of the 280 students in the high school are now active members of the band.

HISD's band program has earned the respect and support of students, staff, and parents and the band director is constantly contacted by other districts for advice on how to set up a similar program.

The director has developed the program using a series of techniques and methods, including:

- A trip once every three years including district-supported trips to Dallas (festival), Orlando (festival), Disney World and Disney Land (Disney magic music days), and last year to Washington, D.C. for the presidential inaugural.
- Students have a voice in what music is selected for play.
- The director does not aim for trophies nor limit the size of the band to only the very best performers. Instead, the band is all-inclusive and reaches out to students who may not be involved in any other activity.

According to several staff members, the director makes a determined effort to attract students to the band program who are not participating in other activities. Parents in focus groups reported that students are involved in the selection of music and are proud to represent their high school in a major trip every three years. One parent observed that children learn more in the band than just playing an instrument.

For the last several years, the band program has consistently turned out district, regional, and area winners. During the past year, two band members made the all-state band, and one member reached the state solo and ensemble competition. These competitions involve all classes of bands and typically include more than 15,000 Texas students annually.

COMMENDATION

HISD's band program is a model program for involving students in co-curricular activities.

FINDING

During the 1997-98 school year, approximately 300 students (duplicate count reflecting students active in two or more sports) will participate in the high school's athletic program. The 14 sports offered are coached by 9 individuals, all of whom are full-time employees and have full-time teaching assignments. The monetary supplements to support the 14 activities for the 300 participants is $39,962, an average of approximately $130 per participating student.

Two athletic directors, one for boys programs and one for girls, coordinate and supervise the athletic programs for HISD. The supplements for these two positions total $10,300, which includes an additional month's work for each director. Each athletic director is given one extra planning period from an otherwise full-time teaching assignment.

In response to the student survey administered by the review team, HISD juniors and seniors responded that "sports was one of the things they liked best about their school." Students also told the review team that participation in school activities and athletic programs allowed them to work with strong, positive role models. Parents and staff were divided, with a group offering strong support for the athletic program and an equal number of teachers and residents who contended that the "athletic program drives the school."

Comments expressed through community focus groups recognized the value and importance of student participation in athletics, and the importance these programs have on the development of personal discipline and responsibility. The high school principal also noted that students involved in extra-curricular activities, as a group, do much better academically and have far fewer discipline problems.

A review of recent newspaper articles revealed that the HISD sports teams were covered extensively, which may contribute to residents' belief that the athletic program is the major focus of the school district.

While the state, under the "no pass, no play" regulation, requires that districts monitor the grades of participants in extra-curricular activities, several districts, such as Humble and Conroe, prepare reports at the end of every six weeks grading period by activity group (e.g., baseball, FFA, Key Club, etc.), both co-curricular and extra-curricular. These reports identify the number of students participating, the number of students that failed one or more courses, and the percentage of students in the activity group that failed one or more courses. These districts have been able to show parents and the community that students participating in extra- or co-curricular activities perform better in school, have higher attendance rates, and have fewer disciplinary problems.

Recommendation 14:

Link the athletic program directly to HISD goals and objectives and report regularly on progress made toward meeting these goals.

HISD should track the academic performance of students participating in the athletic program and relate this information to the annual goals and objectives of the district.

Should a group or series of groups show a negative trend, action can and should be taken to address the problem with the coaches and students involved as opposed to making generalizations about all co-curricular activities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs all co- and extra-curricular program/activity coordinators to submit six week reports on program activities and students performance.	September 1999
2.	Each month at the board meeting the superintendent presents a digest of the reports, sends the digest of activities to the local newspaper and radio station, and posts copies of the digest on bulletin boards in the schools.	On-going

3.	As part of the annual budget process, the superintendent presents an evaluation of the programs, the level of participation in each, the cost of each on a per student basis, and an evaluation of how the program fits in with district objectives.	On-going

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

Interviews with HISD board members and staff indicate a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the academic program and increasing UIL academic program participation. In January 1997, the board established this objective for the former superintendent for the following year. Little formal guidance as to the type of programs, levels of participation, and student accomplishments were provided to measure the success of any efforts in this area although, participation has almost doubled over the past year.

The board approved stipends for the 1997-98 year and budgeted a maximum of $23,000 for 12 coaches in 21 academic areas.

The stipends for athletic coaches are additional salaries for services performed over a given period of time, i.e., the length of the particular athletic season. Academic coaches receive their stipends based upon the number of students they are coaching and the number of competitions in which the student competes. For the 1997-98 school year, the high school UIL academic coordinator received a stipend of $3,000, and the elementary/junior high school UIL coordinator received a stipend of $500. Coaches for competitive academic areas were compensated $100 per event with a maximum of two events for any competition, or $200. To qualify for the compensation, a coach had to have at least two students participating in the event. The number of competitions is scheduled at the beginning of the year so the amount a compensation that a coach can earn will vary by the number of events and competitions in which at least two students compete. There is no maximum amount set on how much a coach can earn.

Recommendation 15:

Link the UIL academic program directly to HISD goals and objectives and report regularly on progress made toward meeting these goals.

During the annual budget process, the board and staff should clarify and document the expectations of each academic program area. Each year as part of the budget process, an evaluation should be provided by HISD's staff of accomplishments by program and how they relate to HISD goals and objectives.

Coaches should be supplied to support each area of competition and paid a stipend just as those in the athletic area regardless of the level of success of any individual student or team.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The principals recommend which academic programs should be sponsored by HISD.	January 1999
2.	The superintendent reviews the recommendations and presents them to the board for information and discussion.	March 1999
3.	The principals determine needed resources for each program area and submit those as part of the budget requests	May 1999
4.	The superintendent reviews the budget requests and recommends them to the board as part of the annual budget.	June 1999
5.	The board reviews the recommendations, makes any modifications, and approves the programs and resources.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Establishing a stipend for UIL coaches based on time and responsibilities can be accomplished with the $23,000 annual budget established for this program, only the manner in which the stipends are granted will be changed.

F. TECHNOLOGY

CURRENT SITUATION

The technology function within HISD is coordinated by a high school teacher, whose teaching load is down to one course, and a full-time aide. The technology coordinator analyzes hardware and software needs for the district, prepares grant requests for funding, troubleshoots equipment, and conducts staff training. The coordinator and the aide provide support for software and hardware in the following areas:

Business services	Technical support Computer maintenance
Instructional computing	Instructional software: research, purchase, and installation Training on instructional technology Maintenance of personal computers Support for library resources, including the Internet Grant writing

The technology coordinator also plans to install grade and attendance software before 1998-99.

HISD operates a wide area network (WAN) consisting of two Novell 4.11 student servers, one Novell 3.2 administrative server, one Windows NT Internet proxy server and one Windows NT mail server, and a CDNET Cd server for library resources. Ninety-five percent of HISD hardware runs either a combination of DOS 6.x and Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, and 5 percent of HISD hardware, used by

the special education program, runs Macintosh 7.0 or Apple IIe. All of the district's hardware is linked through the network, but none of the Special Education equipment is on the network.

All HISD classrooms have Internet access. Two computers in each classroom have access to the Internet, one a Pentium and one a 486 processor. The elementary/junior high reading classrooms, which are teaching the accelerated reading program, have six additional 486 processors which do not have access to the Internet but are used to support the accelerated reading program. One high school English classroom has an additional four 386 processors without network access strictly for composition work, and one other high school English classroom has nine additional 486 processors without Internet access for journalism and yearbook work.

The current inventory of HISD computers by location is included in **Exhibit 2-54**.

Exhibit 2-54
HISD Inventory of Computers
1997-98

Usage	Administrative Use	Student Use	Total
Used by all levels (including servers)	23	11	34
Combined use by elementary and junior high school	7	33	40
Used by elementary only	17	83	100
Used by junior high school only	6	53	59
Used by high school only	23	110	133
Total	**76**	**290**	**366**

Source: HISD technology coordinator.

The technology budget for the last three years is presented in **Exhibit 2-55**.

Exhibit 2-55
HISD Technology Budget
1995-96 through 1997-98

Year	Local Funds	Technology Allotment	Total
1995-96	$76,000	$25,640	$101,640
1996-97	$134,751	$25,182	$159,933
1997-98	$127,706	$28,454	$156,160

Source: HISD technology coordinator.

From the written survey responses both parents and teachers gave the technology program high marks. In response to a question on HISD's use of technology as an instructional tool, 85 percent of the teachers graded the use as an "A". Among parents, 79 percent said HISD was effective in using technology as an instructional tool.

FINDING

The technology coordinator, in concert with a district technology committee, has prepared a detailed five-year plan that is updated annually. The most recent update came in April 1998.

The plan includes a technology mission statement, district goals, an evaluation and assessment of achievements and needs, action plans to implement each objective and a timeline for accomplishment, and estimated budget requirements for each objective. The technology coordinator has been successful at preparing grants and receiving funding. Over the past two years she has been successful in acquiring over $300,000 in grants funds (**Exhibit 2-56**).

Exhibit 2-56
HISD Grant Funds for Technology
1996-97 through 1997-98

Grant Source	Year	Amount	Purpose
Goals 2000	1996-97	$99,000	Elementary computer lab Pre-K through 4th grade teacher training
Goals 2000 - continuation funding	1997-98	$67,922	Pre-K through 4th grade teacher training Accelerated reading software and books Some computers for the library
Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF), Round 2	1997-98	$151,000	Forty-five computers, scanners, printers, etc. and training for technology staff
Total		**$317,922**	

Source: HISD technology coordinator

During the course of the review, the technology coordinator indicated that she applied for but did not receive the Texas Education Agency's Technology in Education (TIE) program grant.

COMMENDATION

HISD's technology program is a model of excellent planning, implementation, and resourcefulness.

FINDING

The *Long-Range Plan for Technology 1996-2010*, prepared by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and submitted to the Texas Legislature in November 1996 provides recommendations in four key areas: teaching and learning, educator preparation and development, administration and support services, and infrastructure for technology. Timeframes associated with accomplishment of these recommendations varies for each recommendation but includes three basic time periods: short-term, 1997-98; mid-term, 1999-2002: and long-term, 2003-2010.

A key recommendation for local school districts is providing a computer workstation for every student by the year 2010. By the end of 1998, the goal is to have four students for every workstation. By the end of 2002, the goal goes to 3-to-1, and by 2010, the goal is 1-to-1. HISD has an average of 3.5 students for every workstation available for student use.

COMMENDATION

HISD exceeds TEA's recommended number of computers per students for 1998, and has developed a plan to meet TEA recommendations for 2002.

FINDING

The review team's assessment of the curriculum indicated that there is no core curriculum in technology. According to interviews with the technology coordinator, this has not been a district priority. As a result, there is no teacher involved in monitoring general computer use or computer lab use at the elementary level, and no lab time and courses for grades 5-8 other than basic computer literacy skills, such as word processing, or spreadsheet use.

While teachers in pre-K through grade 4 have had excellent technology training, the teachers in grades 5-12 have had little or none. Part of the TIF grant is designed to provide limited training targeted to this group.

According to the technology coordinator, if computer literacy could be taught in grades 5-7 and keyboarding in grade 8, additional courses in website design, desktop publishing, computer programming and repair, and database design and management could be taught in high school. None of these programs are currently available.

With the change to the TEKS curriculum, both teachers and students will be evaluated more heavily on their abilities to demonstrate proficiency in the use of technology to support their classroom work. Other school districts with which the review team is familiar, such as Katy and Cypress-Fairbanks, have developed K-12 technology curriculum and developed training programs and incentives, such as new hardware and more software, for teachers to take the training.

Recommendation 16:

Develop a K-12 technology curriculum.

By developing this curriculum, HISD will begin addressing the state mandates in curriculum included in TEKS and increase the skills of students in technology.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The technology coordinator solicits information from TEA, RESC XII, and other districts regarding technology curricula.	September 1998
2.	The technology coordinator reviews this information, designs a suggested series of courses, and reviews this information with the technology committee.	January 1999
3.	The technology committee recommends the courses to the former superintendent for inclusion in the district's instructional program.	March 1999
4.	The superintendent presents the course program to the board for approval.	June 1999
5.	The program is implemented.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Since the district already has extensive hardware and software, it is unlikely that additional costs will be associated with implementation of that curriculum. Costs for supplies and materials associated with some of the recommended courses can be met within the district's existing budget.

FINDING

The technology coordinator does not function full-time in that role. She still teaches at least one course. As a result, she has been unable to find the time to install needed teacher productivity software that HISD has already purchased and received, such as grade book and student attendance, nor train teachers in their use. There are currently four teachers in the CATE area that possess the skills to teach additional courses.

The expectation of the job makes it apparent that a teacher's salary is inappropriate. Because this individual is not considered a part of the district's management team, she is often not privileged to meetings with administrators where decisions may be made without regard to the technology implications.

Recommendation 17:

Establish the technology coordinator position as a full-time administrative position.

The remaining class taught by the technology coordinator can be absorbed by one of the other three teachers in the Career and Technology Education program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent recommends increasing the technology coordinator position to full-time status and reassigns remaining teaching responsibilities.	September 1998
2.	The board approves creation of a full-time position.	September 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The current salary is in line with other administrative positions, therefore no increase in pay is estimated.

G. SPECIAL EDUCATION

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD has participated in a special education cooperative since the original federal legislation in this area was passed in 1974. Originally, the cooperative involved 18 districts, but in 1981, that cooperative split into two separate cooperatives, the Bosque County Special Education Cooperative with 8 districts and the Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative with nine area districts: Evant, Goldthwaite, Hamilton, Hico, Jonesboro, Lometa, Mullin, Priddy, and Star. One of the original 18 districts, Pottsville, consolidated with HISD in 1989.

Over the past three years, the number of students served by the cooperative has risen by 18.2 percent (**Exhibit 2-57**).

Exhibit 2-57
Student Population for the Hamilton Area
Special Education Cooperative
1994-95 through 1996-97

	Student Population			
District	**1994-95**	**1995-96**	**1996-97**	**Percentage Change over the Period**
Evant	28	33	36	28.5%
Goldthwaite	143	154	162	13.3%
Hamilton	**173**	**183**	**179**	**3.5%**
Hico	72	81	92	27.8%
Jonesboro	41	41	44	7.3%
Lometa	76	108	95	25.0%
Mullin	43	53	54	25.6%
Priddy	21	22	27	28.6%
Star	31	32	53	71.0%
Total	**628**	**707**	**742**	**18.2%**

Source: Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative.

The cooperative has a board of managers made up of one representative from each participating district. The cooperative employs a director and hires necessary administrative staff and instructional personnel who support all of the member districts. These positions include: diagnosticians, psychologists, counselors, speech therapists, and transition coordinators. **Exhibit 2-58** describes current staffing in the cooperative. These are not all full-time positions. For example, the psychologists are contract personnel who work 1-2 days per week.

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Exhibit 2-58
Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative Staffing
1997-98

Position	Full-time	Part-time or Contract
Director	1	
Psychologist		2
Diagnostician	6	1
Supervisor, Speech Therapy	1	
Speech Therapist	2	
Supervisor, Deaf Education		1
Occupational Therapist		1
Physical Therapist		2
Counselor	2	
Teachers	1	1
VAC/Transition Coordinator	1	
Technology Coordinator		1
VAC Aide	1	
Speech Therapist Assistant	1	
Support Staff	3	
Total	**19**	**9**

Source: Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative.

Each member district of the cooperative hires certain special education instructional staff that serve only that district. This staff includes the positions of resource teachers, behavior management teachers, self-contained classroom teachers; and pre-school programs for children with disabilities (PSPCD) teachers; aides; nurses; and bus monitors. Current district full-time equivalent (FTE) staff is included in **Exhibit 2-59**. Goldthwaite, Lometa, Mullin, and Star serve students who reside in residential treatment centers, group homes, and foster homes which influences the amount of staff required.

Exhibit 2-59
Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative Staffing by District
1996-97

District	FTE - Teachers	FTE - Other Personnel	Total Staff
Evant	2	2	4
Goldthwaite	18	9	27
Hamilton	**10**	**9.5**	**19.5**
Hico	5	9	14
Jonesboro	2	2	4
Lometa	8	12	20
Mullin	4	5	9
Priddy	1	1	2
Star	3	3.5	6.5
Total	**53**	**53**	**106**

Source: Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative.

100

Once a need has been determined by a member district and forwarded to the Special Education Cooperative, this request is reviewed by the special education cooperative director and approved by the board of managers before the district can spend the funds.

The 1997-98 budget for the Special Education Cooperative is $3.4 million. The cooperative is very detailed in the way the funds are distributed to each district. Each participating district receives their state allocation from which they deduct their own district's salaries for special education personnel. The remainder of the allocation is then sent to the cooperative to pay the cooperatives expenses.

A maximum of 15 percent of the funds can be spent for administrative purposes. The remainder must be spent on direct services to the students. At the end of each year, the director distributes to each of the districts any unused money earmarked for administrative purposes. For HISD, the total has been $241,002 over the past 5 years (**Exhibit 2-60**) in addition to $300,000 in 1996-97 for the early childhood building and $75,000 in 1993-94 for additional classroom facilities. This money does not have to be spent on special education but can be put in the district's general fund.

Exhibit 2-60
HISD Funds Received from the Special Education Cooperative
1992-93 through 1996-97

Year	Amount Received
1996-97	$113,186
1995-96	$70,473
1994-95	$46,220
1993-94	$0
1992-93	$11,123
Total	**$241,002**

Source: Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative.

HISD serves as the fiscal agent for the cooperative and is compensated for administrative services provided on behalf of the cooperative. For 1997-98, the charge for administration is $20,000. The cooperative also pays one-half of the annual financial audit which amounted to $3,600 in 1996-97. The cooperative's shared services agreement allows the board and director the ability to develop necessary guidelines for all administrative functions and to establish reimbursement for services to districts.

FINDING

The cooperative funds a special education inclusion teacher and an aide in HISD. The role of the inclusion teacher is to work with special education students in the regular classroom rather than providing specialized instruction in a separate classroom. Usually, such instruction involves language skills, reading, and other instruction that would otherwise be taught in special education resource classes.

Federal and state regulations require students to be served in the least restrictive environment possible given the individual student's specials needs, which in the view of many means providing the services in the regular classroom. A student cannot however, be placed in a regular education classroom if the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee feels this is an inappropriate setting for the child. The student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must call for this instructional arrangement as the most appropriate setting. Many of HISD's special education students are served in the regular education

classroom the majority of the time, but are removed for short periods to receive specific special education services such as speech therapy or more individualized instruction.

In discussions with the cooperative's director and the elementary/junior high school principal, it became clear that HISD did not fully understand that removing children from the regular education classroom for even a small part of the day was disqualifying these children for the additional funding that comes to districts that serve these same students entirely in the regular education setting. According to TEA officials, HISD currently receives $6,474 annually for a single special education student served for a portion of the day in a resource room based on the state's annual basic allotment per student of $3,315 for 1997-98. For a student served in a mainstream classroom, HISD receives $6,962. The difference is $488 per year per student.

Discussions showed that many HISD children currently served in resource rooms, could just as easily receive instruction from the inclusion teacher, thereby qualifying the district for additional funds without compromising the services delivered to the children.

Over and above the funding, additional benefits can accrue to a district that serves special education children in the regular classroom. For example, the inclusion teacher is not restricted to working with just the special education students. The teacher can conduct small group session with special education students as well as regular education students who need additional attention but do not qualify for special education designation.

The director indicated that the district has received training under a grant from the state to encourage inclusion for all students. To this point, HISD is using this method with some students but is not fully using the inclusion teacher and aide.

Recommendation 18:

Review the instructional settings of each special education student to determine the least restrictive environment for the delivery of services and arrange for the most effective use of the inclusion teacher and aid.

Since the inclusion approach must be specified in the IEP developed during the annual ARD meeting with the family, it is impossible to estimate the number of students who would qualify for such an approach. Based on conversations with the special education cooperative director, it is possible that between 20 and 30 special education students currently served in special education could use this approach.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The principals identify qualified students for the inclusion approach during the annual ARD meetings.	Ongoing throughout the year
2.	The director works with the principals, regular education teachers, and the inclusion teacher to identify instruction needs and develop corresponding approaches.	Ongoing throughout the year
3.	The inclusion method is implemented for all qualified students and progress is evaluated at the end of each year.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The special education cooperative is already providing HISD with an inclusion teacher and aid. Assuming 20 students currently served in a resource room could be served in the regular classroom with assistance from the inclusion teacher and aid, the district could anticipate additional revenues of $9,760 annually based on an additional $488 per student per year.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Review the instructional settings of each special education student.	$9,760	$9,760	$9,760	$9,760	$9,760

FINDING

Unlike regular education, there are no limitations on the number of students in a class at any grade level in special education. In order to increase the number of staff that a member district has dedicated to special education and paid for out of the state funds it receives, the director of the special education cooperative must conduct a review and confirm that a need exists and that no other remedy is available.

HISD recently requested an additional teacher for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. In an interview with the review team, however, the director of the cooperative indicated that several other teachers at different grade levels in the same school had much smaller classes and that the burden could be adjusted over those classes. As a result, the elementary/junior high school principal restructured the class sizes.

However, the review effort takes time and detracts from the other functions that the director performs. It also creates the potential for conflict regarding the individual judgment of the director versus the school district. Some districts, such as Houston, have established their own standards for class sizes (**Exhibit 2-61**). Having guidelines gives each school an initial point of evaluation when determining staffing needs.

Exhibit 2-61
Recommended Students Per Hour in Various
Elementary Special Education Classes in Houston ISD

		Recommended Students per Hour		
Type of Class		**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Aide Assignment**
Resource		10	12	None
Self-contained				
	Generic	8	12	1 per 2 classes
	PSPCD	8	10	1
	Life skills	8	12	1
	Multiply impaired	6	9	1 per 4 students
	Behavior adjustment	7	9	1
	Auditory impaired	6	12	
	Behavior intervention	7	8	1
	Visually impaired	5	10	
Itinerant		8	12	
Homebound		10 (average caseload)		
Parent/infant		15 (average caseload)		

Source: Houston ISD, Special Education Department.

Recommendation 19:

Develop special education staffing guidelines for member districts.

The guidelines should be applied by member districts, such as HISD, prior to requesting a review by the director of the cooperative. The director can review the results of applying the guidelines to determine whether a need still exists and then recommend staffing modifications to the board, as necessary. Having the guidelines will be helpful to the member districts in determining appropriate staffing levels for various class types.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director evaluates staffing guidelines from other districts and cooperatives.	September 1998
2.	The director reviews the guidelines with former superintendents in member districts and obtains their approval for the guidelines.	November 1998 - January 1999
3.	The director incorporates all superintendent changes, reviews the fiscal impact, and recommends guidelines to the board for approval.	March 1999
4.	The districts implement the guidelines.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact will vary among the member districts.

FINDING

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 requires school districts to provide certain education-related health services to children with disabilities to meet their unique needs. As of September 1992, the state's Medicaid program was amended to allow school districts to enroll as Medicaid providers and to apply for Medicaid reimbursement for services they are providing to children with disabilities.

School Health and Related Services (SHARS) are defined as those services determined to be medically necessary and reasonable to ensure a disabled child under the age of 21 receives the benefits of a free and appropriate public education. These services include assessment, audiology, counseling, medical services, school health services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, psychological services, and associated transportation.

School districts need not spend any new money, but instead can simply apply for reimbursement for specific services provided to Medicaid-certified children. The reimbursement amount is for the federal portion of the fee for each eligible service, which is 62.28 percent for 1998. Districts must certify that they used state or local funds to pay for the remainder. Reimbursements can be deposited in the general revenue fund, and do not necessarily have to be spent on special education services.

To qualify for Medicaid reimbursement, claims must be filed within 12 months of the date that services are delivered. To participate in SHARS, the Special Education Cooperative could act as provider and send TDH a consolidated bill for all member districts. Once the reimbursement is received, the cooperative would send the appropriate portion of the reimbursement to each district based on services provided to students in each district.

Based on the significant potential for increased revenues, other school districts around the state have invested resources in hiring professional staff to assist with Medicaid billing or have contracted for this service through a third party. Some firms assume their relationship with the district will be ongoing, while others attempt to make the district more self-sufficient. The contractor helps determine the eligibility of each student, and submits claims to the Texas Department of Health and its Medicaid contractor for payment.

TDH estimates that six or seven vendors are available in Texas, including the Texas Association of School Board (TASB) with fees of approximately 10 percent of reimbursement amounts. A representative from TDHS is available to provide the cooperative and member districts an overview of how SHARS works, and how best to implement the program to meet their particular needs.

One of HISD's peer districts, De Leon, received $43,961 in reimbursements through SHARS in 1997. Since HISD's enrollment and student populations are similar, it is reasonable to assume that it could achieve a similar level of reimbursements.

Recommendation 20:

Bill Medicaid for SHARS services provided to Medicaid-eligible special education students and contract for claims processing.

The Special Education Cooperative should seek technical assistance from the Texas Department of Health and become a SHARS provider. A firm should be hired to help determine ongoing Medicaid eligibility for all special education students, assist with training and support for documenting eligible services, and handle all billing.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of the Special Education Cooperative to seek assistance from the Texas Department of Health to provide an overview to the cooperative and member districts on how to become a SHARS provider and to determine what services best meet HISD's and the cooperative's needs.	September 1998
2.	The director of the Special Education Cooperative contacts billing providers and requests information on the types and costs of services.	September 1998
3.	The director of the Special Education Cooperative contracts with a billing firm and establishes procedures to document all SHARS-eligible services.	October 1998
4.	Billing of all Medicaid services begin.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

It is conservatively estimated that HISD can match or exceed the level of reimbursements achieved by the De Leon ISD in 1997, or $43,962. The district would have to pay a 10 percent fee, or $4,396 for a net gain of $39,566 per year. A full year's savings are anticipated for the first year because retroactive billings for up to 12 months are allowed by Medicaid. Other districts in the cooperative will also receive reimbursements under the program.

Recommendations	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Bill Medicaid for SHARS services.	$39,566	$39,566	$39,566	$39,566	$39,566

H. GIFTED AND TALENTED

BACKGROUND

Since 1987, state law has required that all Texas school districts have educational programs to serve the needs of gifted and talented (G/T) students and that programs be available in all districts and at all grades. Gifted and talented students are characterized as having high levels of achievement, intellectual and academic ability, creativity, leadership skills, and talent in the visual and performing arts.

Districts are required to have a systematic process for identifying gifted and talented students. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) issues guidelines for the identification of gifted and talented students in an effort to ensure that all of these students receive a quality education. Additionally, funding for the identification of gifted and talented students and programs is available through the Texas Foundation School Program. This program is intended to provide gifted and talented programs for students from various cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Districts can receive state funds for gifted and talented programs serving up to 5 percent of a district's total student population.

CURRENT SITUATION

The gifted and talented program in HISD has approximately 40 students involved in grades K-12. The coordinator of the program has been recognized on a statewide basis and provides training in other districts. The coordinator serves on the selection committee along with the principal and counselor.

Students do not have to be permanently placed in the G/T program until the end of the 2nd grade. They can be placed in a "talent pool" for close observation and interaction with permanently-placed students during this period.

The program involves a five-part evaluation: 1) intellectual ability (standardized test), 2) achievement (standardized test), 3) creativity (standardized test), 4) portfolio of student work, and 5) teacher referral based on observable gifted behaviors. For students who are already in the talent pool and are being screened again, the G/T coordinator provides a portfolio of items and information about observed behaviors in the setting of the gifted classroom. The process is rigorous and designed to admit only truly gifted and talented students. In interviews with the coordinator, she indicated that programs in other school districts that are designated as gifted and talented are not as demanding or selective in their admission of students.

FINDING

During focus group meetings, the program received criticism for perceived exclusivity, especially for students new to the district. The coordinator indicated to the review team that students new to the district who were placed in a gifted program in their sending district are observed and screened after six weeks in HISD to allow time for teacher observation and gathering a portfolio, which can include items from the sending school and work at home. This can occur at any time during the school year. For students already in HISD, screening occurs once a year in late spring. Students can be screened as many times as parents and teachers request. HISD does this to be sure that they find "late bloomers."

However, the coordinator also indicated that it was difficult for students entering HISD from another district to qualify for the program and that about one-third of all transferring students had ever qualified.

The coordinator indicated that the state plan for the education of gifted and talented students, adopted by TEA in November 1996, recommends that "gifted and talented students...work together as a group, work with other students during the school day as well as the entire school year". In the state plan, this element is one of the criterion for achieving exemplary status for a gifted and talented program. In HISD at grade levels where there are multiple gifted and talented students, the district has divided them up among the grade-level teachers rather than grouping them in one class as the coordinator has

recommended. As a result, the gifted and talented students have only limited time to work together each week.

Contacts made by members of the review team with representatives of TEA's Division for Advanced Academic Services indicated that districts in Texas have moved away from establishing other groupings of students, such as a second level of gifted and talented students, because it appears to be "tracking" of students. However, including these students in the same regular classroom with gifted and talented students for longer-term observation would be a positive strategy. However, TEA cautioned that the GT curriculum must be properly differentiated from the regular education program.

For the talent pool, students are currently accepted if they meet 3 of the 5 criteria. To make selection objective, this same standard could be applied to existing HISD students. HISD has taken some steps toward clustering this year but talent pool students were not included in the clustering.

Recommendation 21:

Evaluate the clustering of all gifted and talented students at a grade level in the same regular classroom and including transfer students and existing talent pool students in the same classroom.

In this way, the gifted and talented students could be better served, teachers would have more time to evaluate those students who may qualify but were not able to do so immediately, and the district would move toward achieving exemplary status for its GT program. Even if the non-qualifying students fail to qualify for the program in the future, they will have access to the same differentiated instruction by being clustered with the gifted and talented students in the regular classroom.

If clustering is adopted, the coordinator should review the progress of non-qualifying students each year and determine whether continued inclusion in these classes is warranted.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, principals, and the HISD coordinators evaluate the clustering approach and determine its applicability in HISD.	June 1999
2.	Principals schedule all gifted and talented students at the same grade level into the same regular classroom.	June-August 1999
3.	The curriculum evaluation team reviews the curriculum to assure proper differentiation following TEA guidelines.	June-August 1999
4.	The HISD coordinator provides a list of non-qualifying students who need to be scheduled in the same classes by grade level.	June-August 1999
5.	The HISD coordinator reviews the progress of students and the effectiveness of the approach..	June-August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

I. CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

CURRENT SITUATION

Career and Technology Education (CATE) is a popular option for HISD students. **Exhibit 2-62** provides a list of courses available to students in this area.

Exhibit 2-62
HISD CATE Course Offerings
1996-97

Course Name
Introduction to world agricultural science and technology
Applied agricultural science and technology
Introduction to agricultural mechanics
Home maintenance and improvement
Animal and plant production
Food technology
Introduction to horticultural sciences
Energy and environmental technology
Agribusiness management and marketing
Personal skills development in agriculture
Entrepreneurship in agriculture
Environmental technology
Agricultural communications
Agricultural electronics
Applied entomology
Computer applications in agriculture
Advanced animal science
Agricultural biotechnology
Advanced floral design
Advanced agribusiness management and marketing
Aquaculture production
Independent study in agricultural science
VEH farm and ranch maintenance
VEH horticulture related
Agricultural structures technology
Agricultural metal fabrication technology
Agricultural power technology
Specialty agriculture
Animal science
Soil and plant science
Equine science
Landscape design, construction, and maintenance
Horticulture plant production
Wildlife and recreation management
Agricultural mechanics
Multi-occupational cooperative training
Microcomputer applications (computer literacy)

Source: HISD.

While these courses are available in HISD, the frequency with which they are offered is limited by the number of teachers and the space available.

Texas school districts receive state funding based on attendance and, in the case of CATE, the state has a weighted funding formula that is designed to compensate districts for additional operating costs associated with certain CATE programs. That formula is the Adjusted Basic Allotment multiplied by 1.37. The intent of that funding is to compensate for lower student/teacher ratios in laboratory classes where equipment use is a safety concern, programs requiring expensive technology/equipment as teaching tools, career guidance and planning services, and development of partnerships with business and industry.

FINDING

Although survey responses indicated that many students planned to go to college, there is a concern by teachers, board members, that more emphasis needs to be placed on training students not bound for college. The curriculum is limited. In technology, there are no classes available for students in website design, desktop publishing, computer programming and repair, and database design and management. These types of skills would be especially helpful to students not intending to continue their education at the college level. Likewise, HISD has not developed a formal job training program with local employers.

HISD staff indicated that they want to become more "job specific" in their programs for these students, using workforce demand guidelines developed by regional councils of government. HISD has attempted to develop job specific courses in the current curriculum. It uses the wage and employment projection data provided by the Central Texas Workforce Commission in Temple to gauge trends and identify potential employment areas. However, time and staff resources are not available to complete this task within the district.

Troy ISD, in Bell County, initiated a cooperative approach through Temple ISD for a CATE program in the early 1990's. Temple has more courses than Troy could offer, and since Temple ISD is only 7 miles from Troy ISD, Troy buys class space from Temple. Other area districts, such as Rogers and Holland, have also begun to avail themselves of this opportunity. Troy has also developed a relationship with Temple College and with the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD) in Waco to provide a state-approved TECHnical PREParation program. Tech Prep is a program jointly approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board and TEA that combines the junior-senior years of high school with two years at the junior or community college. The plan leads students toward associate degree or baccalaureate degree programs and helps students prepare for jobs in at least one field of engineering technology, applied science, health, or business through a planned, sequential program of study.

Tech Prep programs in Texas provide training that prepares students for high skill, high wage jobs by supplying the education and training that those jobs require. The program results in cost and time saving incentives to students and their parents who no longer pay college tuition, fees, and related costs for duplicated courses, materials, or academic remediation. HISD already has an established relationship with Central Texas College (CTC) that could be similar to that provided by Temple College and CORD.

HISD's peer districts face the same problem because there are no large employers in their communities. The review team contacted each of the peer districts, and none of them had a formal business partnership program. HISD only has a few large employers in the area making it difficult to have a strong business/school partnership. The major employers in the Hamilton area are a molding manufacturer, nursing homes, welding companies, wireless television company, banks, and other small businesses.

Troy and Clifton school districts have used other methods, such as a CATE mentor program and a pre-employment lab to provide job-specific training and courses. In a mentor approach one to two students are placed with a small business, such as a metal fabrication shop, to develop the student's skills. The pre-employment lab exists within the school, actually sets up a business, such as an auto mechanic's shop or a home builder, and trains students in those crafts.

Distance learning has been implemented in districts throughout Texas. However, application to CATE programs is difficult because of the types of courses, e.g., auto mechanics. Distance learning does not lend itself to the "hands on" approach often required of these programs.

The key constraints within HISD to establishing such programs is a lack of space to establish a pre-employment lab, and identifying a sufficient number of mentors to employ all the students participating in the program. Unlike other courses such as foreign language or math, it is not easy to teach courses involving the use of equipment through a distance learning method. A cooperative venture with other area districts, such as Evant, Hico, and Jonesboro, might offer the opportunity for developing a pre-employment lab and greater opportunities for mentor/tutor programs. Since districts are reimbursed at full cost for any CATE transportation, a central site could be identified and transportation provided to students.

There are a number of colleges and universities in the HISD area (**Exhibit 2-63**).

Exhibit 2-63
Colleges and Universities Near HISD

Location	College/University
Stephenville	Tarleton State
Brownwood	Howard Payne
Killeen	Central Texas College
Belton	Mary Hardin Baylor
Waco	Baylor University McClennan County Community College
Hillsboro	Hill County Junior College

Source: HISD.

With the exception of CTC the district has not established a formal relationship with other neighboring colleges or universities. It is not known if these institutions are interested in offering classes at HISD or allowing HISD students, teachers, and staff to take classes via satellite or by correspondence.

One of HISD's peer districts, Goldthwaite, is involved in a program called "Distance LearNing" through Central Texas College. This program provides a type of video classroom where classes can be observed live on TV in a Goldthwaite classroom. Some of the programs are interactive allowing students in a remote location to ask questions of a teacher teaching in the host location.

Recommendation 22:

Explore opportunities to expand the CATE program beyond cooperative arrangements with CTC to include CORD, area districts, and local businesses.

The improvements needed in the career and technology education programs can be best addressed through the cooperative effort of several districts using the resources of area colleges, CORD, other area colleges and universities, local businesses, and RESC XII. The interview team contacted RESC XII about the prospect of facilitating a cooperative in this area, and service center personnel indicated that it could be done readily.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The CATE lead teacher contacts CORD, other area colleges, RESC XII, area districts, and local businesses about cooperative efforts.	August 1998
2.	The CATE lead teacher, with assistance from RESC XII, develops a plan to provide greater options for area CATE courses and programs.	November 1998 - February 1999
3.	The CATE lead teacher presents this plan to the superintendent and board for review, comment, and approval.	March 1999
4.	The CATE lead teacher develops a plan and identifies resources necessary to go forward.	January 1999
5.	The CATE lead teacher presents the plan to participating districts' boards for approval.	February 1999
6.	The plan is implemented and put into place for the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year.	March - August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The focus of this recommendation is on expanding the current CATE offerings with existing resources through cooperation. It is reasonable to assume that any additional transportation costs will be absorbed by the state, and that additional dollars for Career and Technology courses will also come from the state, if these programs are expanded.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews all financial operations of the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD), including:

A. Accounting
B. Budgeting
C. Payroll
D. Purchasing
E. Risk Management
F. Investments
G. Fixed Assets

Successful financial management operations ensure that the district receives all available revenue from the state and federal governments; maintains a track record of sound financial decisions and adequate and equitable budget allocations; issues timely, accurate, and informative reports on the district's financial position; maintains adequate internal controls; employs a skilled, well-trained staff; and maintains a consistent record of unqualified opinions by its external auditors.

Within this overall financial framework, asset and risk management provides insurance coverage to adequately cover the district's assets with the lowest possible premiums; cash management places district funds in investments with good interest potential while safeguarding the district's cash; taxes are collected quickly and efficiently; and fixed assets are accounted for and safeguarded against theft and obsolescence.

The purchasing function assures that goods and services are acquired at the best price, at the right time, and in the right quantity to support the needs of the district and its personnel, while complying with local, state, and federal regulations. Opportunities are identified to cooperatively purchase goods with other jurisdictions when it is mutually beneficial to all parties involved.

BACKGROUND

The district receives revenue from local, state, and federal sources. On average, Texas school districts receive about 52 percent of their revenues from local property taxes, 44.5 percent from the state, and 3.5 percent from federal sources. HISD and the selected peer districts receive a greater percentage of their revenues from the state (**Exhibit 3-1**).

Exhibit 3-1
HISD and Peer District Revenue Sources
As a Percentage of Total Revenues
1996-97

District	Local/Other Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue
Valley Mills	42.8%	54.9%	2.3%
Clifton	40.3%	56.8%	2.8%
De Leon	32.4%	63.8%	3.8%
Hamilton	**30.2%**	**68.0%**	**1.8%**
Goldthwaite	26.0%	71.7%	2.2%
Cisco	25.9%	70.0%	4.1%
Early	23.9%	74.2%	2.0%
Hico	22.5%	74.4%	3.0%
Rio Vista	20.6%	77.2%	2.1%
RESC XII	**34.8%**	**58.2%**	**7.0%**
State	**52.0%**	**44.5%**	**3.6%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

Since 1994-95, HISD's general revenue funds from the state have increased 43.1 percent while local revenues have increased only 7.6 percent. The general revenue fund accommodates most of the district's funding, other than special funds such as special education and food services. State revenues budgeted for 1997-98 now make up 70.2 percent of HISD's budget which is up from 57.6 percent in 1993-95. Overall, general revenue funds from all sources increased 17.5 percent (**Exhibit 3-2**).

Exhibit 3-2
HISD General Revenue Fund Sources
1994-95 through 1997-98

Revenue Source	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budgeted	Percentage Change over Period
Local and Intermediate	$1,442,159	$1,575,894	$1,707,530	$1,551,300	**7.6%**
State	$2,551,844	$3,009,347	$3,408,351	$3,652,246	43.1%
Other resources	$435,112	$773,342	$0	$0	N/A
Total	**$4,429,115**	**$5,358,583**	**$5,115,881**	**$5,203,546**	**17.5%**

Source: HISD Audit Reports and Adopted Budget.

In 1989, the Pottsville ISD was consolidated with the HISD. As a result, HISD receives an incentive payment from the state. When two districts consolidate, if the state aid that the consolidated district will receive is less than the two districts would have gotten from the state had they not consolidated, the difference is paid to the consolidated district for a period of ten years. The payment amount is based on student enrollment in the base year; the amount can go down if the enrollment declines, but can not go up from the base-year amount if enrollment increases. The incentive payment set in the base year for HISD was $52,966 annually. In the second, third, and fourth years after consolidation the incentive payment went down slightly due to a decline in enrollment, but has remained at the base level since the fifth year. One last payment will be made to HISD in September 1998.

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Texas has a court approved school finance system to equalize wealth, which requires wealthy districts to pay into a pool that, together with additional state funds, is used to subsidize funding for poorer districts. Wealthy is defined as a district with property values at or above $280,000 per pupil in weighted average daily attendance.

The state distributes payments to all districts based on a per pupil in weighted average daily attendance (WADA) basic allotment. This allotment is adjusted according to the property wealth of the district. For HISD, the basic allotment is $3,315 for 1997-98.

Wealthy districts can also choose to send money directly to a poorer district by purchasing some of their WADA, rather than sending the money to the state for distribution. HISD was recently contacted by the Calhoun County ISD in Port Lavaca asking them to enter into a contract to sell the district's WADA directly to Calhoun County. What this means is that Calhoun County ISD, which spends about $150 more per student in weighted average daily attendance than HISD, would send HISD an amount per student equal to what they spend on their own students. According to the business manager, HISD could earn an estimated $140,000 to $155,000 annually, over and above what the district would have received from the state. According to TEA, wealthy districts are notified of their status on July 15, and must declare their intent to TEA by September 1. Should this plan be approved by all parties involved, HISD could begin receiving payments from Calhoun County as early as February 1999.

While revenues since 1994-95 have increased 17.5 percent, expenditures for the same period have increased 43.1 percent. The largest percentage increases have been in curriculum and instructional staff development, student transportation, health services, and instruction **(Exhibit 3-3)**.

Exhibit 3-3
HISD General Revenue Fund Expenditures
by Function
1994-95 through 1997-98

Expenditure Category	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Budgeted	Percentage Change over Period
Instruction	$2,203,250	$2,551,820	$2,902,763	$3,004,365	**36.4%**
Instructional Resources and Media Services	$ 80,282	$83,854	$88,970	$100,071	24.6%
Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development	$3,222	$3,982	$1,226	$6,900	**114.2%**
School Administration	$158,498	$178,706	$187,669	$196,319	23.9%
Guidance, Counseling, and Evaluation Services	$76,368	$85,109	$90,215	$109,559	43.5%
Health Services	$31,239	$37,489	$40,358	$45,218	**44.7%**
Student(Pupil) Transportation	$103,843	$158,207	$203,121	$158,475	**52.6%**
Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities	$247,664	$258,685	$278,360	$61,974	-75.0%
General Administration	$258,358	$265,103	$ 295,919	$283,471	9.7%
Plant Maintenance and Operations	$355,576	$398,116	$424,422	$432,314	21.6%
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	$161,974	$329,965	$548,155	$169,000	4.3%
Other (Uses)	$385,600	$ 432,176	$402,807	$313,892	-18.6%
Total Expenditures	**$3,680,274**	**$4,351,036**	**$5,896,161**	**$5,267,158**	**43.1%**

Source: HISD Audit Reports and Adopted Budget.

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The Hamilton County Appraisal District (HCAD) collects all taxes for the district as well as several other taxing entities in the county. Collections are sent to the district by check and deposited on a daily basis into the district's maintenance checking account. The collection rate for HCAD was 97.6 percent for 1997; including delinquent tax collections, the combined rate was more than 100 percent.

Exhibit 3-4 shows that HISD's tax rate has not changed over the past three years. The value per student has declined 2.1 percent even though overall assessed property value has increased.

Exhibit 3-4
HISD Tax Rates and Assessed Property Value
1994-95 through 1996-97

Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage Change over the Period
Maintenance and operations tax rate	$1.05	$1.05	$1.05	0%
Interest and sinking fund	0	0	0	0%
Total tax rate	**$1.05**	**$1.05**	**$1.05**	**0%**
Total assessed property value	$116,507,955	$129,484,223	$122,655,836	5.3%
Value per student	$132,697	$139,681	$129,932	**-2.1%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1993-95 through 1996-97.

Compared to its peer districts, HISD has the lowest property tax rate **(Exhibit 3-5)**. The rate is also well below the average for the region and the state.

Exhibit 3-5
HISD Adopted Tax Rate and Taxable Property Value
Compared to Peer Districts
1996-97

District	Taxable Property Value/Pupil	Equalized Tax Rate
Rio Vista	$55,008	$1.807
Early	$68,032	$1.612
RESC XII	**$113,336**	**$1.500**
Texas	**$172,673**	**$1.430**
Hico	$80,298	$1.350
Clifton	$137,004	$1.323
Valley Mills	$171,664	$1.312
Cisco	$87,381	$1.300
De Leon	$119,463	$1.140
Goldthwaite	$93,237	$1.060
Hamilton	$129,932	**$1.050**

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

The overall tax rate includes both maintenance and operations, and debt service. As a result of the $5.5 million bond approved by Hamilton voters in 1997, HISD's tax rate will include debt service payments beginning in 1998-99. The business manager indicated that this will result in an estimated 19-cent tax increase.

CURRENT SITUATION

The business manager is primarily responsible for accounting, payroll, budgeting, investments, insurance, fixed assets, and purchasing. On a daily basis, the business manager is assisted by an office aide, who performs bookkeeping and secretarial functions and is responsible for entering state-required public education information management system data (PEIMS) into the automated finance system. HISD also receives support through RESC XII on an as-needed basis.

HISD uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) software and has purchased all of the modules available in this finance system for budgeting, payroll, fixed assets, and purchasing. The district uses the RSCCC software for monthly accounting and reporting. This system uses a series of options, or menus, to allow a district to pick and choose the level of detail it prefers to use in maintaining its business records.

The RSCCC software is able to generate a wide variety of management information reports in four general categories: summary reports, fixed asset/inventory reports, vendor/purchase order reports, and journals/checks/detailed ledger reports. Summary reports are most useful for board members and district administrators and include a summary of general ledger activity, comparisons of revenue to budget, budget status by organization (department, school, etc.), and budget status by program (technology, athletics, etc.).

For detailed analysis appropriate for department heads and program managers, there is the final set of reports on journals, checks, and ledgers. These reports can include encumbrance journal, capital outlay report, check register, detail general ledger, detail budget status by organization and/or program, and accounts payable listing.

A. ACCOUNTING

BACKGROUND

The Texas Education Code (TEC) requires Texas school districts to use a standard fiscal accounting system that meets State Board of Education (SBOE) requirements. When budgets are filed with the state, districts must show financial information sufficient to enable the SBOE to monitor the funding process, and to determine educational system costs by school district, campus and program.

Districts report budgets and expenditures using an accounting code structure. The purpose of the structure is to enable a statewide analysis of district expenditures, revenues, staffing, and budget information through PEIMS. Although certain codes within the 20-digit code structure may be used at local option, the sequence of the codes within the structure, and the funds and chart of accounts, must be uniformly used by all school districts in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. A specified number of spaces, or digits, is set aside for each category **(Exhibit 3-6)**.

Exhibit 3-6
TEA's Financial Accounting and Reporting Code Structure

Category	Number of Digits
Fund	3 digits
Function	2 digits
Object	4 digits
Sub-object	2 digits
Organization	3 digits
Program	6 digits

Source: TEA, Financial Accountability System Resource Guide.

The first three-digit fund code is used for all financial transactions to identify the fund group and specific fund. For example, the primary fund of a district is the general revenue fund from which most salaries and benefits and the majority of operating expenditures come. Special funds are also identified by this code, such as Special Education, Head Start, and Food Service.

The next two-digit function code is applied to expenditures/expenses that identify the purpose of the transaction **(Exhibit 3-7)**.

Exhibit 3-7
TEA Function Codes

Function Number	Function Description
11	Instruction
12	Instructional Resources and Media Services
13	Curriculum Development and Instructional Staff Development
21	Instructional Leadership
23	School Leadership
31	Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services
32	Social Work Services
33	Health Services
34	Student (Pupil) Transportation
36	Curricular/Extracurricular Activities
41	General Administration
51	Plant Maintenance and Operations
52	Security and Monitoring Services
53	Data Processing Services
61	Community Services
81	Facilities Acquisition and Construction

Source: TEA.

The four-digit object code identifies the nature and object of an account, a transaction , or a source such as salary and benefits, professional services, supplies, and capital.

FINDING

All districts, including HISD, use fund, function, and object codes to classify revenues and expenditures. The sub-object code, however, is optional; it allows districts to establish special accountability at the local level and permits a district to monitor specific areas of operation or special programs that are tailored to its particular needs. For example, a district can assign a sub-object code for band, and track all expenditures, including payroll for the band program. If the band program generates revenue, this can also be tracked for this program.

The Education Service Delivery and Performance Measures chapter of this report recommends that annual student performance objectives be developed in each program area, and that these objectives should reflect district goals and tie directly to budget allocations. Current accounting practices within HISD, however, do not provide the level of detail needed to track budgets and expenditures by all key program areas.

For example, although estimated budget requirements are included for each objective of the district's technology plan, the technology coordinator has had difficulty in getting detailed reports that reflect actual technology expenditures. This lack of detail has made it difficult to track the success or failure of the plan, and for making adjustments as needed to improve it.

During interviews with department heads and program managers, the review team was repeatedly told that financial information to manage their programs was not available on a regular basis. Some members of the site-based decision making (SBDM) committees expressed frustration at not having the kind of detailed program information needed to develop comprehensive district improvement plans. As a result, it has been difficult to tie planning to district and board objectives and to evaluate how specific expenditures have contributed to their success.

Detailed financial information can be tracked by the RSCCC system by assigning sub-object codes to the program areas that are most critical to the outcomes established by the board. For example, if the board were to establish reading as an area of focus, then reading programs would be identified by a sub-object code to enable budgeting and tracking of expenses by grade level in this program area.

Since HISD does not budget or report expenditures by sub-object code, all financial reports are summary in nature. Because of this lack of detail, valuable information about programs and functional areas are not being accounted for. Current reports only show total budget and year-to-date revenues and expenditures by line item. These reports are not provided to the principals or district administrators because the reports contain very little information that is specific to their area of management. As a result, principals and administrators are not being held accountable for monitoring expenditures or budgets in these specific areas.

RSCCC summary reports can track expenditures by line item, including supplies, travel, or any other account code by program area, campus, grade level, or department. This information becomes valuable to the board for planning purposes, and to principals, department heads, and program managers for implementing the plan in such program areas as math, science, band and technology.

The business manager provides the board with monthly reports at regularly scheduled board meetings. These reports include a check register; revenue and expenditure totals by account code, by month, and year-to-date; cash-on-hand analysis; tax collections status; and current fund balance.

However, board reports do not include trend analyses or multi-year comparisons that could show increasing expenditures in certain functional or operational areas or decreasing or lower-than-expected revenues from one or more sources. Nor do the board reports provide forecasts, such as what the fund balance is likely to be at the end of this year if monthly expenditure levels continue at the current pace, or whether budgeted revenue and expenditure totals are likely to be met.

Recommendation 23:

Establish accounting reports that detail budgets and expenditures by key program areas.

The business manager has acknowledged that additional budget and expenditure detail is needed, and indicated he will begin addressing the issue during 1998-99. The business manager should budget and record expenditures by program area using sub-object codes. RESC XII should be contacted to provide technical assistance on how other districts have improved their accountability using sub-object codes. Once the appropriate program areas and departments have been assigned sub-object codes, the finance system should be used by principals and program managers as a tool for budgeting and purchasing.

The superintendent and the business manager should work with the board to determine what information would be most helpful and then use the report writing capability of the RSCCC system as the basis for making projections and conducting trend analyses in key management areas. The business manager should analyze expenditures by program area to allow the board to make good resource allocation decisions to meet the objectives contained in the district's five-year strategic plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the business manager to establish more detailed accounting reports based on key program areas.	August 1998
2	The business manager consults with RESC XII personnel for technical assistance on assigning sub-object codes to program areas and departments that best meet the needs of HISD.	September 1998
3.	The business manager, in coordination with the superintendent, principals, and program managers, sets up account codes for each campus, department, and program area.	October 1998
4.	The business manager, principals, and program managers allocate their budgets using the account codes set up for each campus, department, and program area.	October 1998
5.	The superintendent and the business manager, with board input, identify the most appropriate types of management reports by program and expenditure area that includes trend analyses to meet the needs of the district.	November 1998
6.	The business manager modifies reports based on the five-year strategic plan and the needs of the board, principals, department heads, and program managers.	March 1999 Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

A local certified public accounting (CPA) firm performs the annual financial audit. This same CPA firm has been conducting the audit for at least the past eight years. The auditor provides management letters each year that address such issues as IRS reporting, long-term borrowing, accounting procedures, budget monitoring, and general ledger beginning balances.

In the 1995-96 management letter, the auditors noted that "the general ledger beginning balances should be adjusted to agree with the audit balances." As part of its annual audit, the auditor finds items that need to be corrected, and submits them to the district in the form of adjusting entries. The district is supposed to use these figures to correct their balances in line with the audited amounts. This process was not completed in a timely fashion by the district, however.

At the conclusion of the audit, which by law must be completed by December 31 for the fiscal year ending the prior August 31, the auditor is supposed to provide the district with the adjusting entries as well as the adjusted ending balances. As of March 1998, when members of the review team met with the auditor, the auditor had not yet provided HISD with those entries or balances for the fiscal year ending August 31, 1997. The auditor indicated that this was due to an unusually busy workload.

Based upon the experience of the review team, external auditors usually provide districts with a draft report of their audit and management letter prior to issuing a final report, usually in November. This procedure allows the district to point out any misinformation and provide additional information, if necessary. The auditor takes this information and updates the draft report, and then conducts an exit interview with the district. This usually closes out the auditor's site work and is the last step to finalizing the audit report. This interview normally occurs during November or early December.

HISD needs accurate financial information to comply with TEA requirements for submitting information to PEIMS. Initial information on student enrollment, annual budget, and staffing is required in October of each year, while audited financial information for the prior fiscal year is required in February. Without adjusting entries, audited financial information cannot be submitted as required. And, information provided on a monthly basis to the board is potentially incorrect, hampering its ability to manage the finances of the district.

Recommendation 24:

Require the auditors to provide adjusting entries at the time they complete their site-work.

The district should require the auditor to provide adjusting entries to the district in draft form upon completion of the auditor's site work in November or December. After the business manager has agreed to the figures, the data should immediately be entered into the financial system so that balances agree with the final audit report. Should the district need assistance in making these entries, it should rely upon the expertise of the auditor.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager meets with auditor to discuss exit interview procedures and timing.	October
2.	The business manager requires that the auditor provide the necessary adjusting entries at the completion of the auditor's site work.	November
3.	The auditor and business manager conduct the exit interview, and the auditor provides all adjusting entries necessary for final general ledger balances.	November - December
4.	The business manager makes the necessary entries to adjust the district's ending balances.	December Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

The office aide performs the accounts payable function, which includes processing invoices and issuing checks to all vendors. Bills are paid once a month with computer generated checks. These checks are approved as a part of the board meeting and are signed by two board members at that time. The district also issues hand-written checks, called "in-house" checks. The business manager and the superintendent sign in-house checks. According to the business manager, these checks are used primarily for travel expenses, to take advantage of discounts, and to make transfers between accounts.

Exhibit 3-8 shows the number of in-house checks written for the last fiscal year and the number written as of the date of the site visit by the review team. In-house checks are typed on the typewriter, are numbered differently than computer generated checks, and must be manually entered into the computer. A check register of these checks, after the checks have already been issued, is approved as part of the board meeting.

Exhibit 3-8
In-House Checks Written by HISD
1996-97 through 1997-98*

Type of Checks	1996-97	1997-98*
In-house	1,137	511
Computer-generated	2,757	1,517
Total	**3,894**	**2,028**
Percent in-house checks	**29.2%**	**25.2%**

Source: Hamilton Independent School District
*As of the end of February 1998

Typically, a district will generate computer checks anywhere from once a week to twice a month as long as the expenditures are within the budget. These checks are then signed by appropriate district staff and mailed to vendors. A check register of all checks written for the month is then included in the

board report as a matter of information only since the board has already approved the budget and, therefore, the expenditure of funds. Only if expenditures are not within budget are payments held, pending board approval of a budget amendment.

Recommendation 25:

Reduce the number of in-house checks by preparing computer checks on a weekly basis.

The business manager should establish a procedure to generate checks weekly through the RSCCC system. Weekly check runs will significantly reduce the typing of checks and the manual entry of these checks into the computer system. Any checks needed on an emergency basis could still be generated in-house and signed by the superintendent and business manager. The board then approves all computer checks, with the assurance that they do not exceed budget limits, at their regularly scheduled meeting.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The office aide processes invoices and issues computer-generated checks on a weekly basis.	September 1998
2.	The business manager submits the check register to the board as an information item at each regularly scheduled meeting.	October Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

B. BUDGETING

CURRENT SITUATION

Each year the budget is set during the August board meeting. The budget is based primarily on prior years' expenditures with adjustments made for new programs that have been approved by the board. For each of the last four years, high school staff have compiled the high school budget and submitted it to the site-based decision-making (SBDM) committee before sending it to the business manager. Each staff member is requested to complete a budget request form. The requests are compiled by department and forwarded to the SBDM committee before submission to the business manager. At the elementary level, the same process is being implemented this year.

The RSCCC budget module allows the district to work on a budget for the next school year without affecting the current budget year or the current financial records. The module allows the district to work on proposed budget changes and view cumulative results. Once the budget is approved, the values can be transferred to the general ledger in the finance system.

FINDING

There is no formal budget calendar identifying the timetable for the budget review and adoption process. Typically, the superintendent discusses the timing of the process with the board during regular

board meetings in the spring, and they jointly establish convenient dates for workshops to review budget information, which meets all requirements related to meetings, hearings, and published notices.

Many districts establish a formal budget calendar to identify key points in the process and an overall timetable through board approval of the budget. Such a calendar is an important planning tool because it establishes specific tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines for all committees, and central and campus-level staff. It shows the steps needed to develop and adopt the budget within the time established by law. Important dates can be missed without a budget calendar, and tasks can be overlooked or performed out of sequence.

Exhibit 3-9 provides an illustration of a budget calendar from Spring ISD.

Exhibit 3-9
Sample Budget Calendar

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date
Meet with Health Administration Services to discuss health benefits for 1997-98 budget	Asst. Superintendents for Business and Personnel	2/5/97
Approval of current staffing guidelines	Board of Trustees	2/11/97
Meet with Health Administration Services to discuss health benefits for 1997-98 budget	Asst. Superintendents for Business and Personnel	2/12/97
Review of budget calendar and discuss budget process and per student allocations	Superintendent's Cabinet	2/18/97
Send out 1997-98 Budget Packets to Schools and Departments. Arrange work sessions as needed.	Assistant Superintendent for Business	3/7/97
Discuss revenue forecasts and overall financial condition	Superintendent's Cabinet	4/1/97
Discuss salaries and fringe benefits	Superintendent's Cabinet	4/1/97
Schools and Departmental budgets and staffing forms completed and returned to Business Office	Principals, Supervisors and Superintendent's Cabinet	4/7/97
Review by Superintendent's Cabinet preliminary budget package, non-allocated requests, and staffing proposals	Asst. Superintendents for Business and Personnel	4/15/97
Benefits Committee meeting	Benefits Committee	4/15/97
Review tentative budget	Superintendent's Cabinet	4/22/97
Budget study session with Board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	4/22/97
Budget study session with Board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	4/29/97
Budget study session with Board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	5/6/97
Budget study session with Board	Superintendent's Cabinet & Board of Trustees	5/13/97
Publish Notice of Public Hearing for 1997-98 Budget	Asst. Supt. for Business	5/20/97
Public Hearing on Proposed 1997-98 Budget	Board of Trustees	6/3/97
Adoption of 1997-98 Budget	Board of Trustees	6/10/97
Vote on intent to increase tax rate if increase of more than 3% is proposed. Schedule public hearing on proposed tax rate increase	Board of Trustees	7/8/97
Receive Appraisal District Certified 1997 Roll	Tax Assessor/Collector	8/29/97
Calculation of effective and rollback tax rate.	Tax Assessor/Collector	8/29/97
Publication of effective and rollback tax rates; schedules of fund balances; submission to Board of Trustees	Tax Assessor/Collector	9/9/97
Publish "Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Increase" (if necessary) at least 7 days before hearing	Tax Assessor/Collector	9/11/97
Conduct public hearing on proposed tax rate (if necessary). Schedule meeting to adopt tax rate.	Board of Trustees	9/23/97
Publish "Notice of Vote on Tax Rate" before meeting to adopt tax rate	Tax Assessor/Collector	9/25/97
Adopt 1997-98 Tax Rate	Asst. Supt. of Business	10/7/97

Source: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Financial Services, Spring ISD.

A budget calendar is not only useful for board members and administrators, but can also provide the community additional information about the general process.

Recommendation 26:

Establish a formal budget calendar.

The calendar should include dates of workshops, public meetings or hearings, and board meetings. It should also identify positions responsible for ensuring that each step takes place in accordance with the timetable. The calendar should be published each year in the newspaper and posted on the bulletin boards in each school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the business manager establish an annual budget calendar with action steps, key dates, and assigned personnel.	September 1998
2.	The superintendent presents this calendar to the board for review and to determine if modifications are necessary to accommodate schedules of board members.	October 1998
3.	The board approves the calendar, and the superintendent informs HISD staff of the timelines, assigns responsibilities to appropriate staff, posts the calendar, and sends a copy to the local newspaper.	November 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

Accounting rules adopted by TEA require all school districts to account for all items in the fiscal year that were purchased and received. Since the fiscal year (September 1 - August 31) does not coincide with the school year, which usually starts in mid-August, districts have to purchase items for the coming year in the prior fiscal year.

It is common for school districts to allow their schools expend up to 50 percent of the current year's budget on purchases for the coming year. This purchasing ensures that teachers and schools have the supplies needed at the beginning of the next school year. Additional purchases made after September 1 are accounted for in the budget of the next fiscal year.

HISD, unlike other school districts, has established a dual budget for supply purchases. Two separate general ledger accounts are used and maintained to allow for purchases during the first part of the school year and purchases to prepare for the start of the next school year. According to the business manager, the first account is used for purchases up until approximately May 31. Then, items purchased for the next school year and received prior to the end of the current fiscal year, August 31, are paid for from the second account.

This level of accounting is not necessary because TEA accounting rules do not require purchases to be accounted for by the year that supplies will be used. Hence, the separate budget accounts create unnecessary additional work.

Recommendation 27:

Set the budget for the entire school year and eliminate dual codes for purchases.

The budget for supplies should be set for the entire school year and not divided for expenditures during different parts of the year. Each principal should be responsible for the expenditure of funds and the timing of those expenditures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager eliminates the use of dual codes for purchases and produces supply budgets for the entire year.	September 1998
2.	Principals and other staff responsible for budgets plan their supply purchases for the entire year while ensuring that all supplies are purchased in the appropriate fiscal year.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

The budget for salaries is prepared on a spreadsheet that lists each HISD employee. The business manager manually calculates pay for an additional year of service and any salary supplements (increases that HISD provides out of local funds) to project the next year's budget for payroll. **Exhibit 3-10** provides a sample of the information contained in the spreadsheet.

Exhibit 3-10
Sample HISD Salary Budget Worksheet

Name	Position	Months Employed	Pay Step	Pay Grade	District Years	Total Years	Total Salary
Jane Doe	Teacher, 1st grade	10	17	7	9	16	$36,760

Source: Hamilton Independent School District Business Manager.

Once complete, these budget amounts are entered by function into the RSCCC budget module to arrive at the total fund budget. The manual spreadsheet created by the business manager duplicates the budget module in the RSCCC software, which includes payroll projections. The RSCCC budget module can automatically calculate salary projections and does not require the extra step of re-entering budget amounts into the computer. The software performs calculations more quickly, and with less potential for error, than the manual process now used by HISD.

According to the business manager, the RSCCC payroll budget function is not used because of a concern that projected payroll amounts for budget purposes could override existing payroll information, which could cause employees to be paid the wrong amount. RESC XII staff familiar with the software indicated that this was not possible, and that none of the districts in that region using the budget module have encountered this problem.

Recommendation 28:

Use all the payroll budgeting capabilities of the RSCCC system.

The business manager should use the budget module to project payroll costs for an additional year of service and for percentage increases. The budget module should be used to respond quickly and accurately to board inquiries in such areas as what the budget impact might be of raising teacher salaries by a particular percentage.

Once the board has set the payroll budget, the final amounts can be downloaded from the budgeting module. Implementing this procedure will eliminate the need to create a separate spreadsheet, reduce the overall time spent on this process, and eliminate the likelihood of errors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager receives training on the RSCCC budget module from RESC XII.	September - December 1998
2.	The business manager downloads current payroll information to the RSCCC budget module and discontinues the use of the separate spreadsheet for making payroll projections.	February 1999
3.	The business manager downloads final payroll projections into the payroll system once the budget has been set.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of training can be accommodated within the existing training budget.

C. PAYROLL

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD issues all payroll checks once a month on the 27th. This process is altered if the 27th falls on a weekend or holiday; in those cases, payroll checks are issued the Friday before. Exceptions to this occur in November, December, and January. The November payroll occurs before Thanksgiving, the December payroll occurs before Christmas, and since there would be such a long period between the December and January payrolls, the January payroll is completed a week early. Since most Texas school districts are completely closed during holiday periods, it is common to issue payroll checks at different intervals. The district offers employees the option of having their check directly deposited in the bank; 32 of the 173 employees use this service.

The RSCCC payroll module is linked to the personnel module so that personnel information does not have to be entered into the computer twice. Payroll expenses are transferred to the finance system after each payroll run, thereby eliminating manual journal entries to record these transactions.

FINDING

All employees are paid on a calendar basis. The business manager calculates the wages of hourly employees and converts them to an annual salary. He then calculates the monthly amount to be paid in each of the twelve months.

Pay remains the same each month unless there is an exception. Exceptions include deductions for excess leave and supplemental pay for University Interscholastic League (UIL) teachers. These are calculated by the business manager in the month the service is received. For UIL supplemental pay, a teacher must fill out a request-for-pay form that must be approved by the UIL coordinator and the principal. This form goes to the business manager, who enters each one individually. A proof list is printed that indicates the total supplemental amount, which is compared to a manual tape of the request-for-pay forms. Deductions for excess leave are also entered at this time based upon requests for leave forms. Deductions are balanced in the same manner as supplements.

The business manager is the only employee trained on the payroll system and is solely responsible for entering supplemental pay, making adjustments for leave, and generating payroll. RESC XII serves as the back-up for the payroll system as well as all accounting modules and can perform these functions with adequate notice. However, in the event the business manager is unavailable due to an emergency, the district's payroll may not be completed on a timely basis.

In other small districts with which the review team has experience, one or two additional personnel are cross-trained in key financial areas such as payroll, purchase order processing, and accounts payable.

Recommendation 29:

Cross-train the office aide and at least one other person to perform all payroll functions.

Where positions are limited, back-up support and cross-training should exist for key positions and not rely solely on one individual or RESC XII. In addition to training the office aide, the superintendent's

secretary or one of the school clerks should be trained to perform the task and should be regularly allowed to perform it to remain proficient with the process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager trains the office aide and one other employee on payroll functions.	October 1998
2.	The office aide and the other selected employee attend additional training at RESC XII.	November 1998
3.	The office aide and the other selected employee run payroll at least once every 3-6 months to remain proficient in the process	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of training can be accommodated within the existing training budget.

FINDING

Employee leave information is not maintained as a part of the payroll system. Individual index cards are kept in the superintendent's office and updated as requests for leave are approved. All costs associated with accumulated leave must be manually calculated. The process of maintaining this manual information is time consuming. The RSCCC payroll module allows for the accrual and maintenance of employee leave.

Another problem with HISD's current procedure is that any analysis of the fiscal impact of changing some of the leave options would have to be done manually. And these calculations would be much more prone to error than those that are done automatically in the payroll/personnel system.

Recommendation 30:

Enter all employee leave information into the RSCCC payroll module and update on a monthly basis.

Employee leave information should be entered into the system monthly and balances provided to employees for verification. This provides checks and balances on the system's accuracy and allows any requested information from the board or SBDM committees to be provided more quickly and accurately. Updating the system should coincide with the monthly payroll run.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager ensures that all existing employee leave information is entered into the personnel/payroll system.	October 1998
2.	The business manager updates the information in conjunction with the monthly payroll check process.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

D. PURCHASING

BACKGROUND

An effective and efficient purchasing function should have procedures that ensure that all goods and services are acquired at the best price, at the right time, in the right quantity, and in the most efficient and effective way possible. Purchases must be in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, and opportunities to cooperatively purchase goods with other jurisdictions, when it is mutually beneficial to all parties involved, should be identified.

In 1995, the Texas Legislature enacted changes to state purchasing regulations for school districts. These changes were designed to provide the best value to school districts through competitive bidding. Generally, when districts purchase items valued at $25,000 or more within a 12-month period, one of the competitive bid processes summarized in **Exhibit 3-11** must be followed.

Exhibit 3-11
Competitive Purchasing Methods for Texas School Districts

Purchasing Method	Description
Competitive bidding	Requires that all bids be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms, and conditions, and bid prices.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after proposal opening.
Request for proposals	Furnishes a mechanism for the competitive sealed proposal process that generates the receipt of competitive sealed proposals and contains several key elements, including newspaper advertisement, notice to proposers, standard terms and conditions, special terms and conditions, scope of work, acknowledgment form/response sheet, felony conviction notice, and contract clause.
Catalog purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software, and services only.
Interlocal contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state, or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity to take responsibility for both the design and construction of a project.
Job order contracts	Provides for the use of job order contracts for minor repairs and alterations.
Construction management contracts	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter, or repair facilities using a construction manager.

Source: Texas Education Code, Section 44.031.

CURRENT SITUATION

The business manager serves as the purchasing agent for the district. While there is no formal document that outlines the overall process for purchasing, all district employees were aware of the procedures to make a purchase or request a check. During the school year, purchase requests are manually typed on pre-numbered requisitions by the person making the request, such as teachers, while purchase requests in the summer are made by the campus secretary. Vendor information is entered as well as a description of the item being purchased and the amount. The campus principal signs and forwards the requisition to the business manager.

The business manager reviews the requisition for the appropriateness of the vendor and to ensure that sufficient funds are in the budget. Also, the business manager assigns the account code. The purchase order is then mailed or the item ordered by phone or facsimile. Unless the dollar amount of the purchase is very large, the purchase order amount is not encumbered, which would subtract the amount from the budget to prevent overspending.

In addition to purchase orders, in-house checks are used to pay for certain services: travel reimbursement, hotels, referees, and transfers between funds. The district uses a separate form, which serves as a check request, to request in-house checks.

FINDING

Typically, a district will have a formal document that outlines the purchasing process. At a minimum this document will include dollar limits, encumbrances, bidding procedures, sample completed purchase orders, authorization requirements, and small item purchases. A purchasing manual can also outline the flow of the purchase order through the system from the request, to the purchase, through the issuance of payment.

Many districts do not require purchase orders for purchases below a certain dollar amount, such as $50. Below that level it becomes more costly to write and process the purchase order than to make a purchase. Rather than a purchase order, such small purchases can be handled through the computerized check-request process. Immediate needs could be handled through in-house checks. A purchasing manual would specify dollar limits for which no purchase order is needed as well as higher limits which require a formal bid.

Under the current HISD process, very few purchase orders are encumbered, although the business manager tries to process purchase orders in the same month they are generated to avoid over expenditures. Nonetheless, purchase orders are being generated only as a mechanism to confirm quantities ordered and to pay vendors.

The business manager attempts to keep track of funds available and determines when program, campus, or department budgets have funds available. However, management letter comments by the district's external auditors for the 1995-96 audit addressed the fact that the district had exceeded the budget in several areas without first obtaining board approval for amendments.

The RSCCC purchasing software has many features, one of which allows district personnel to enter purchase orders directly into the purchasing system. At the time of entry, the budget is checked for adequate funds and the amount is encumbered. This eliminates the possibility of over-spending in any

area and eliminates the time and effort required for the business manager to track this information manually. According to RESC XII staff, a number of the RSCCC software users in the region are taking advantage of this system.

The TASB policy manual used by the district has a purchasing section, but the areas covered only refer to broad purchasing requirements contained in state law and the TEC. They do not address operating procedures to direct staff in performing day-to-day purchasing operations. And they do not specify dollar amounts for which purchase orders are required; this level of detail must be developed at the district level.

Recommendation 31:

Develop a comprehensive purchasing manual.

The business manager should consult with other districts to develop a purchasing manual that addresses, at a minimum, the process for issuing purchase orders using the RSCCC system, bid procedures, small item purchases, individuals authorized to approve purchases, training opportunities, and information necessary to properly complete the purchase order.

The business manager should request RESC XII training for all HISD personnel that generate purchase requests so that the system is fully and properly used. This will ensure that all purchase orders are encumbered and that expenditures above authorized budget levels do not occur.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager meets with RESC XII and other districts to obtain sample purchasing manuals.	October 1998
2.	The business manager develops the procedures manual and submits it to the superintendent for approval.	November 1998
3.	The business manager, office aide, and appropriate district staff attend training on the purchase order system.	December 1998
4.	District personnel begin entering all purchase orders in accordance with the procedures manual.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The additional cost of training can be accommodated within existing resources.

FINDING

HISD's current purchasing policy addresses general state law and TEC requirements relating to the acquisition of goods and services. Several categories of items are bid, including: student insurance; fuel; bread, ice cream, and novelty items; maintenance supplies; instructional supplies; and copy paper; and property and casualty insurance. The district uses the Texas General Services Commission (GSC) to purchase copiers, computers, buses, and tires.

HISD does not conduct an analysis on all bids to determine the lowest bidder, especially if multiple items are involved. For example, when the office supply contract was awarded, all three vendors that submitted bids on the contract were accepted. The bids of each vendor contained items that were not used in HISD, but no evaluation was done to determine which items the district uses and which vendor had the lowest price or best product for each of those items. The business manager informally identifies which bidder has the lowest price on each item when purchase requisitions are submitted.

Exhibit 3-12 shows the dollar amounts by vendor for the purchase of athletic supplies and equipment.

Exhibit 3-12
HISD Athletic Purchases By Vendor and Sport
1997-98

Vendor	Sport	Amount	Total
Athletic Supply	Football	$4,951.18	
	Basketball	$3,866.08	
	Volleyball	$2,732.86	
	Baseball	$1,749.21	
	subtotal		$13,351.27
B & B Athletic Supplies	Football	$6,909.00	
	Basketball	$4,596.55	
	Track	$3,101.00	
	Golf	$536.00	
	Cross Country	$818.00	
	Softball	$667.30	
	Off Season & Weight	$4,354.00	
	Volleyball	$390.80	
	subtotal		$21,372.65
Alert Services	Medical	$5,732.78	$5,732.78
All American Sports	Football	$8,773.39	$8,773.39
Perry Country Club	Golf (Golf Balls)	$2,939.71	$2,939.71
Promaxima Fitness	Weight	$3,700.00	$3,700.00
Foley's	Golf (Shirts)	$1,542.02	$1,542.02
Total for selected vendors			**$57,411.82**

Source: HISD Business Manager.

These purchases in the above chart are total dollars by sport and represent the purchase of many individual items. However, there is no documentation to indicate that the district used one of the required purchasing methods or that the best and lowest prices have been obtained. The business manager indicated that these vendors are used because they will deliver their products to Hamilton.

Districts will often prepare a list of specific items in a category such as office supplies or athletic equipment for which it wants to receive bids. Some districts prepare catalogs from which to solicit bids. Vendors can then provide prices on all or some of the items, and the district will select the lowest bid that meets its requirement for that item.

Recommendation 32:

Prepare lists of specific items for which HISD wants to receive bids and prepare a catalog with the selected vendor for use by district personnel.

The business manager should prepare a list of instructional materials and supply items that will be put out for bid. The responding vendor with the best product and price for each item should be determined, and a catalog prepared with the selected vendor for each item, including cooperative and state purchasing lists. The catalog should be provided to all district staff so that vendors can be selected when the initial purchasing requests are prepared. The processes developed by the business manager should be documented and included in the purchasing procedures manual.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager groups items purchased on a regular basis into categories and schedules each category for bid.	October 1998
2.	The business manager develops a list, or catalog, of specific items within each category for which the district wants bids from vendors.	November 1998
3.	The business manager lets the bid for the items at the scheduled time and prepares an analysis of the lowest cost for each item by vendor.	Ongoing
4.	The business manager presents the board with the winning vendors and the items to be purchased from each of the vendors.	Ongoing
5.	The board awards bids to specific vendors according to the lowest price for each item bid.	Ongoing
6.	The business manager distributes and updates the catalog, with selected vendors, to all staff who prepare purchase requisitions.	Ongoing
7.	The business manager documents all vendor selection and identification processes and incorporates them into the purchasing procedures manual.	November 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Based upon experience with other districts, the review team anticipates some cost savings from this recommendation. However, it is difficult to project a specific dollar amount until bids are received.

E. RISK MANAGEMENT

The primary objective of risk management is to establish cost-effect insurance and loss-control programs that minimize financial liability for the district and its employees.

CURRENT SITUATION

The business manager is responsible for ensuring that insurance coverage is adequate to protect the district's, including workers' compensation, property and casualty insurance, directors and officers liability insurance, and employee health insurance. Bids are let each year for all coverages other than health, and workers' compensation which is a self-funded policy administered by Creative Risk Fund. The bid requires an analysis of overall district needs and appropriate deductibles in line with the district's needs. **Exhibit 3-13** details the coverages of the district, other than employee health insurance, and the corresponding cost of each policy.

Exhibit 3-13
HISD Insurance Coverage
1997-98

Company	Details of Coverage	Liability Limits	Deductible	1998 Premium
Insurors Agency of Texas, Inc.	Commercial Auto, Business Auto	$750,000	$100 for each vehicle	$7,048
National American Insurance Company	Commercial Property, Buildings, Business and Personal Property, Computer Equipment	$9,321,989	$1,000	$7,538
National American Insurance Company	General Liability	$1,000,000 each occurrence		$2,112
National American Insurance Company	Educators Legal Liability	$1,000,000 each occurrence	$1,000	$1,230
National American Insurance Company	Employee Dishonesty	$10,000 each occurrence	$0	$100
Creative Risk Fund	Worker's Compensation	N/A		$27,836

Source: HISD Business Manager.

FINDING

For 1997-98, the district solicited bids for employee health insurance coverage. Scott and White was the winning vendor with a combined Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)/Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan. The HMO/PPO plan limits the care providers available to employees whereas the previously-offered indemnity plan allowed employees to go to any doctor or hospital for services. However, the deductibles and the out-of-pocket limits were significantly higher; only 30 employees participated in the indemnity plan during 1996-97 according to the business manager. Since the new plan went into effect, approximately 90 participants are now enrolled. **Exhibit 3-14** shows the differences in coverage and cost for both plans.

Exhibit 3-14
HISD Medical Insurance Comparison
1996-97 and 1997-98

Plan Description	Scott & White HMO/PPO 1997-98	Principal Indemnity Plan 1996-97
Employee Only Cost	$130.25	$238.32
Employee and Family	$334.46	$575.42
Deductible	$10 Co-payment	$200.00/yr.; 80% - 20%
Out-Of-Pocket Limit	$100/day with $500 maximum co-payment per hospital confinement	$1,000/Individual/yr. $2,000/Family/yr.

Source: HISD Business Manager.

Exhibit 3-15 compares the cost to HISD employees for health insurance versus that of employees in HISD's peer districts.

Exhibit 3-15
HISD Medical Insurance Compared to Peer Districts

Net Cost to Employee for Selected Coverage					
District	Amount of Premium Paid by the District	Employee Only	Employee and Spouse	Employee and Children	Employee and Family
Cisco	$150.00	$0	$168.00	$128.00	$238.00
Clifton	$75.00	$133.73	Not offered	Not offered	$344.95
De Leon	$83.13	$95.97 (PPO) $61.13 (HMO)	$247.29 (PPO) $183.07 (HMO)	$224.88 (PPO) $165.02 (HMO)	$414.95 (PPO) $318.19 (HMO)
Early	$143.13	$0	$154.00	$98.09	$238.23
Goldthwaite	$75.00	$61.07	$263.18	$161.15	$330.46
Hamilton	**$63.55**	**$72.36**	**Not offered**	**Not offered**	**$287.85**
Hico	$83.00	$40.00	Not offered	Not offered	$250.00
Rio Vista	$120.00	$29.94 (PPO) $8.27 (HMO)	$217.37 (PPO) $168.61 (HMO)	$179.88 (PPO) $136.54 (HMO)	$354.82 (PPO) $286.19 (HMO)
Valley Mills	$50.00	$105.27	Not offered	Not offered	$356.74

Source: HISD business manager and telephone survey by WCL ENTERPRISES, June 1998.

As shown in the above chart, HISD contributes a lower dollar amount toward the premium cost than any of the peer districts. For the two coverages that HISD has in health insurance through Scott and White, it ranks in the middle on both compared to the peer districts; however, had HISD kept the prior indemnity plan, it would have been the highest-cost plan compared to its peer districts.

COMMENDATION

The district bid its health insurance coverage and reduced the overall cost to its employees.

F. INVESTMENTS

To receive maximum interest on excess cash, a district must forecast its cash needs on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis, so that it can select the type of investment for its funds that will give it the greatest return with maximum protection. This requires knowing when cash is needed so that the investments can be timed to mature in concert with major cash requirements, such as payroll.

CURRENT SITUATION

The business manager is responsible for all cash management functions of the district. All investments of the district were in TexPool at the time of the review, which is a state-administered investment pool that offers a higher rate of return than regular depository accounts. The district has also used certificates of deposit. The board is provided a quarterly report of interest earned through TexPool. There is no written investment policy but the district is in compliance with state guidelines for the investment of excess funds.

The district maintains eight separate bank accounts. The district depository contract provides interest-bearing accounts with no fee for service or account analysis. When the contract was last bid, three bid requests were sent out with only one bank responding. The current contract is with Guaranty Bank and Trust Company.

FINDING

The Hamilton voters approved a $5.5 million bond in October 1997 to build and equip a high school. On December 18, 1997, these bonds were put up for sale. The bonds were issued in January 1998, and the proceeds deposited in the district's account with TexPool. Until the time of use, the funds will earn interest.

In general, a school district is not allowed to earn interest in excess of the cost of the interest payable on the bonds. Since the average interest on the district's bonds is 4.77 percent, it would normally have to return to the federal government any interest that is earned above this level. Since TexPool paid an average of more than 5.5 percent in 1997-98, this could amount to a significant amount of money being returned to the federal government.

Arbitrage is the investment strategy of earning interest in excess of the interest paid on the bonds. Small issues under $5 million, however, have been exempt from the pay-back provisions of arbitrage. On January 1, 1998, the regulations on arbitrage increased the amount of bond sales that can be excluded from $5 million to $10 million. In other words, because the district's bonds were issued after January 1, 1998, it is exempt from having to return excess interest to the federal government as long as tax exempt debt for the district does not exceed $10 million during the calendar year.

The district sought legal advice from a tax attorney to confirm this exemption before issuing its bonds. Consequently, it will be able to earn additional interest that can be used to offset the building costs of the new high school.

COMMENDATION

The district issued its bonds to coincide with a new exemption that will result in additional interest for the district.

FINDING

The district receives NOW account interest for funds in the eight checking accounts maintained with Guaranty Bank and Trust Company. **Exhibit 3-16** provides the interest received in the operating and special education cooperative accounts for the 12-month period from March 1997 through February 1998 which was the most recent 12-month period available during the site work conducted by the review team. For that period, HISD received $8,670 in interest on these accounts.

Exhibit 3-16
HISD NOW Account Earnings
1997-98

Month/ Year	Average Balance - Operating Account	Interest Earned - Operating Account	Average Balance - Cooperative Account	Interest Earned - Cooperative Account	Total Interest Earned
March 97	$203,887	*$437*	$78,922	*$204*	$641
April 97	$121,153	*$232*	$85,241	*$143*	$375
May 97	$107,288	*$212*	$81,954	*$179*	$391
June 97	$111,126	*$221*	$144,546	*$292*	$513
July 97	$86,565	*$184*	$100,148	*$219*	$403
August 97	$172,352	*$378*	$135,378	*$307*	$685
September 97	$166,385	*$383*	$140,257	*$324*	$707
October 97	$290,745	*$798*	$227,163	*$639*	$1,437
November 97	$166,301	*$391*	$198,952	*$462*	$853
December 97	$167,771	*$465*	$169,451	*$459*	$924
January 98	$169,432	*$520*	$148,682	*$413*	$933
February 98	$130,534	*$332*	$200,792	*$475*	$807
Totals		***$4,553***		***$4,116***	**$8,669**

Source: HISD Bank Statements.

HISD does no cash forecasting. It maintains NOW accounts to maintain maximum liquidity even though it may not need all the cash in those accounts. **Exhibit 3-17** compares the interest received from its NOW accounts compared to what it could have received if it had invested the funds in TexPool over the same period of time.

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Exhibit 3-17
HISD NOW Account Interest Compared To TexPool Interest
March 1997 through February 1998

Month/ Year	Total Interest Earned from NOW Accounts	TexPool Average Interest Rate	Total Potential Earned Interest from TexPool	Amount Greater/(Less than) NOW Accounts
March 97	$641	5.3029%	$1,250	**$609**
April 97	$376	5.3653%	$926	**$550**
May 97	$392	5.4185%	$855	**$463**
June 97	$513	5.5361%	$1,180	**$667**
July 97	$404	5.5668%	$866	**$462**
August 97	$685	5.6001%	$1,436	**$751**
September 97	$707	5.5606%	$1,421	**$714**
October 97	$1,437	5.5670%	$2,403	**$966**
November 97	$853	5.6300%	$1,714	**$861**
December 97	$924	5.6688%	$1,593	**$669**
January 98	$933	5.6459%	$1,497	**$564**
February 98	$807	5.5835%	$1,542	**$735**
Totals	**$8,672**		**$16,683**	**$8,011**

Source: HISD Bank Statements and TexPool.

As shown in the above chart, HISD could have earned $16,683 in its TexPool account, which is $8,010.26 more than what it received in the NOW accounts.

Based upon the review team's experience with other districts, most districts look at a historical picture of revenue receipt and disbursement, usually the prior 12-24 months. They then prepare an anticipated cash flow for the next fiscal year including expected monthly receipt of state funds and heavy property tax receipts in December, January, and February. They then tie regular monthly expenditures into the flow and determine where one-time expenditures have occurred in the past and for what purpose and if that is likely to occur again. This type of basic model can then be updated monthly as new information is received.

Recommendation 33:

Forecast cash flow needs on a regular basis and select investments in accordance with cash needs.

The business manager should forecast the district's cash needs on a regular basis and invest excess cash in accounts with the highest possible interest rates.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the business manager to increase interest revenues through cash forecasting and investment of excess cash in accounts with the highest possible interest.	September 1998
2.	The business manager determines when HISD will receive cash receipts from its various revenue sources during the year and evaluates the major cash requirements for each month in the fiscal year and the timing within the month.	October 1998
3.	The business manager reviews current investments, determines what changes can be made to increase interest, and recommends these changes to the superintendent for approval.	November 1998
4.	The business manager monitors cash receipts and disbursements on a weekly basis, makes changes in the cash forecast, and changes the investments to maximize interest.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The investment income will vary depending upon the cash balances available to the district. It is not unreasonable that HISD can achieve at least 75 percent of the $8,000 noted in the comparison above on a regular basis, for a savings of $6,000 per year.

Recommendation	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Forecast cash flow needs.	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000

G. FIXED ASSETS

CURRENT SITUATION

Fixed assets are recorded by the office aide Any item over $50 is recorded in the fixed asset system and receives a tag. This process is primarily for insurance purposes and provides a detail listing of all items subject to insurance replacement.

FINDING

The fixed assets module is used to manage the district's inventory records. Fixed asset/inventory reports provide detail on the assets that the district has on hand, along with additions and deletions. Vendor/purchase order reports can include outstanding purchase orders, approved vendor list, aged purchase order list, and purchase order history.

In 1997, the RSCCC software was upgraded and the fixed asset module was greatly expanded. Unlike the old module, information entered through the purchase order module is directly linked to the fixed asset module, eliminating the need for dual entry. HISD worked with RESC XII to convert their data to the new system.

The new module contains more information about each item such as the purchase order number, vendor name, and account number charged. Because this information was not available under the old module, there was nothing to convert. This was viewed as a problem by HISD, and they continue to use the old module. In using the old module, all additions, deletions, and corrections must be manually entered, causing unnecessary re-entry of data.

Recommendation 34:

Use the upgraded fixed asset module to take advantage of the direct link between purchase orders and fixed assets.

This recommendation should be implemented in concert with activation of the purchase order module. Information on fixed assets existing at the time of the use of this module can be added to the system as time permits.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The office aide attends training on the fixed asset module and works with the RESC XII to verify converted data.	October 1998
2.	The office aide sets up tables so that all inventory items can be added to fixed assets.	October 1998
3.	The office aide begins printing monthly reports to verify additions to fixed assets.	October 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

OPERATIONS

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS

This chapter reviews the operations in the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD) in six sections:

A. Facilities Use and Management
B. Maintenance
C. Food Service
D. Safety and Security
E. Discipline Management
F. Transportation

A. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive facilities use and maintenance program ensures the coordination of all the physical resources in a school district. The program must effectively integrate facilities planning with all other aspects of school planning. Plant operations and maintenance personnel are involved in design and construction activities. To be effective, facilities managers must be involved in long-term planning activities.

A school district's maintenance program should provide a clean and safe environment for the educational process to take place. Building facilities are kept clean. Repairs are made in a timely manner to reduce facility deterioration and increase safety.

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD has one continuous school facility that houses the high school, and a combined junior high and elementary school. This facility, which consists of 137,513 square feet, was constructed in 1968. Adjacent to this facility at the eastern end is early childhood center, which HISD built in concert with the Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative (Cooperative). The early childhood center has seven classrooms, one small testing room, and one conference/assessment room. HISD uses three of the classrooms, and the Cooperative uses the other four classrooms.

HISD has been growing at an overall rate of 6.8 percent over the past four years. At the elementary/junior high school level, the rate has been almost 9 percent (**Exhibit 4-1**).

Exhibit 4-1
HISD Student Enrollment by Grade Level/School
1994-95 - 1996-97

Grade Level/School	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98 (as of 3/30/98)	Percentage Change over the Period
Hamilton Elementary/Junior High School	631	687	692	687	8.9%
Hamilton High School	247	240	252	251	1.6%
Total	878	927	944	938	6.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1994-95 through 1996-97 and HISD statistics for 1997-98.

In 1991-92, HISD added four classrooms to the elementary school, built a new band hall at the high school, and renovated the old band hall to create two secondary-level classrooms.

FINDING

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recommends a facilities planning process model to assist districts (**Exhibit 4-2**). HISD's planning process has mirrored the one recommended by TEA very closely, especially in the needs assessment, scope, and public approval segments of the process.

Exhibit 4-2
Recommended Facilities Planning Process

Program Element	Mission	Responsibilities	Deliverables
Planning	Needs Assessment	Identify current and future needs.	Demographics, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis.
	Scope	Outline required building areas, develop schedules, and costs.	Programming, cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis.
	Strategy	Identify structure.	Facilities project list, master schedule, budget plan, organization plan, marketing plan.
	Public Approval	Implement public relations campaign.	Public and media relations.
Approach	Management Plan	Detail roles, responsibilities, and procedures.	Program management plan and systems.
	Program Strategy	Review and refine details.	Detailed delivery strategy.
	Program Guidelines		Educational specifications, design guidelines, CADD standards.

Source TEA Planning model.

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According to the former superintendent, within two years after the 1991-92 expansion, the district was already out of classroom space. In late 1993, several options were presented to the board for adding 12-15 additional classrooms to the existing school. Those additional classrooms would have been located around the new band hall or where the early childhood center is now located. The estimated price of constructing the classrooms was $1-1.5 million.

Key members of the community held informal meetings in mid-1994, to discuss the merits of constructing a new facility in proximity to the existing campus rather than building the 12-15 classrooms. At these meetings, community leaders and the superintendent identified what would be required to conduct a major land acquisition and facility construction program.

In September 1994, the superintendent recommended expanding this informal group of community members and formalizing it as a task force to sell the land acquisition and facility construction program to the community. The community had not approved a bond issue since the one that was used to build the current facility over 30 years ago.

Each board member was asked to recommend 10 people for inclusion on the task force. After the list was finalized, the task force was constituted with over 60 people and met for the first time in November 1994.

At the first meeting of the task force, the superintendent presented information regarding the district's growth pattern and the need for additional space. He asked the task force to spend the next month soliciting input from the community on how it felt about building a new elementary or secondary school.

In December 1994, the task force convened for the second time to share the input each member had received over the past month. The consensus of the task force members was that the community was receptive to building a new school especially if it adjoined the existing campus.

From January 1995 through June 1996, the task force, superintendent, and the board reviewed information, held discussions, and assessed the situation. In June 1996, the board approved acquiring property adjacent to the existing campus. The first lot was purchased early 1997. This initial lot was large enough to house a facility but not large enough to accommodate other needs, such as parking. Since then, additional property has been identified and negotiations are underway.

In early 1997, the board appointed a steering committee with 15 members made up of several board members, HISD staff, and community representatives. From that point through October 1997, the steering committee looked at new facilities in other districts and worked with an architect to size the project and determine its potential cost. Basic schematics of modules to be included in a new facility were developed.

The steering committee reported to the board periodically with recommendations and questions. Following 28 meetings with teachers, community members, and the architect, and the site visits to other districts, the steering committee recommended that HISD build a high school. The cost of the facility was estimated at $5,500,000 and necessary improvements to the existing facility were estimated to be $250,000.

In July 1997, the board, superintendent, and steering committee hosted a community meeting in the school cafeteria. The meeting was attended by over 100 residents. Information was presented at the meeting regarding the need for a new facility, potential costs, and an approximate timeframe to complete a project. Following this meeting, the final amount of the bond issue was set at $5,490,000. The board called a bond election for October 1997.

The extensive research and numerous interviews and focus groups conducted by the committee proved successful. The bond issue not only passed by a 2:1 margin, it was the first bond issue to ever pass on the first election in Hamilton.

COMMENDATION

HISD worked closely with the community in defining the district's needs, evaluating cost-effective facility alternatives, and conveying those needs and alternatives to the community.

FINDING

Texas laws for school design and construction require use of an engineer for developing plans, specifications, and estimates of construction projects involving more than $8,000 in engineering services. A registered architect must prepare the plans and specifications on any new construction with costs in excess of $100,000, or any alterations or additions to an existing building with costs in excess of $50,000. Finally, all plans and specifications for the construction, or the substantial renovation, modification, or alteration, of a building or facility that has an estimated construction cost of $50,000, or more, must be submitted to the Department of Licensing and Regulation for review and approval before the construction or alteration begins for compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

The state's school facilities standards also address construction quality. They require districts to comply with existing building codes required by the local building authority, or those of either the Uniform Building Code (UBC) or Standard (Southern) Building Code (SBC) and the National Electric Code. Where local codes exist, the district must follow plan review and inspection requirement of the local building authority. Where they do not, compliance with the UBC or SBC must be verified by a qualified, independent third party not employed by the design architect or engineer. In addition, school districts must comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other local, state, and federal requirements as applicable.

The proposed new high school is estimated to be approximately 100,000 square feet. In determining the size of the facility, the district used a series of standard schematic layouts developed by the architect that are capable of being configured to various sites. These layouts, or modules, were developed in concert with the Texas Association of Rural Schools (TARS) and assist a district in arriving at total square footage required for a new school or wing based on a ratio of the number of modules required for the number of students served. A complete listing of the modules is included in **(Exhibit 4-3)**.

Exhibit 4-3
Modules Evaluated in HISD High School Facility Planning Process

Module Type
Basic classroom
School office/entry/check-in
Administrator(s)
Counselor
Nurse
Workroom/staff resources
Learning/resource centers
Technology/multi-media centers (computer classrooms)
Science centers
Special education/special programs
Vocational centers
Janitorial/custodial

Source: Gary Donaldson Architecture.

Since the passage of the bond issue, the architect has met with HISD staff to refine the schematic layouts. In April 1998, HISD released the preliminary conceptual design of the proposed high school. Over the next several months, the architect will finalize the detailed design of the facility for approval by the district. The district would like to complete the project by the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year.

HISD does not, however, have a project management plan in place. While the architect has provided a verbal expectation of the timeline for completion, there is no written master schedule with key milestones to ensure completion by September 1999 and no definition of roles and responsibilities of HISD personnel. The former superintendent was the primary project manager, and no one has been assigned to take over that responsibility. The interim superintendent may have the responsibility while the board searches for a new superintendent; however, there will be another transition required when a new superintendent is hired. A written project management plan and schedule would make that transition easier.

Recommendation 35:

Prepare a project management plan that assigns responsibilities to HISD and contract personnel to govern development of the new facility.

The architect may be able to assist in handling some of the assignments until a new superintendent is located and starts work in HISD. However, a committee of the board and key staff members may need to be involved in developing a schedule and meeting key milestones.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board appoints a committee of two to three board members, the principals, and one-two HISD administrative staff to work with the architect.	July 1998
2.	The committee and the architect develop a timeline for completion of the project and identify key milestones and dates.	July 1998
3.	The architect provides periodic status reports to the committee.	Ongoing
4.	The committee briefs the new superintendent on the project and completion milestones and timeline.	August 1998
5.	The new superintendent assumes responsibility for project management.	September 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

It is not clear that HISD has thoroughly considered all of the implications of opening a separate high school. The district has enjoyed many economies as a result of shared facilities that will not exist once the high school is opened. For example, all students are currently served meals in a single cafeteria and use a single library. Assuming that the high school will operate a separate cafeteria, what additional staffing will be required? Will the library inventory be divided between the schools or will additional books be needed? Will a single librarian continue to serve both schools or will a new librarian be required? With the addition of more than 100,000 square feet of facilities, what additional maintenance and custodial staff will be required?

Some of these issues have design and construction implications, and the final design of the facility can effect the long-term costs of operation for the district. For example, some districts have built a central kitchen to serve all schools. A central kitchen costs more to construct than a single kitchen, but may save labor and equipment costs in the long run.

To thoroughly understand the long-range implications of the design and construction of the new facility, some district's have constructed a paper model of how the program will operate. In moving from one continuous campus to separate facilities, even though it will be in close proximity, a full understanding of *all* of the implications is even more critical. This requires walking through what exists today, and envisioning how the program will operate in the new facility.

Not only is the instructional setting important, but all of the support functions must be considered, such as purchasing of goods and supplies, custodial operations, insurance, utility delivery and conservation, accounting for fixed assets, textbook distribution, mail distribution, and even student attendance and payroll accounting.

Who will be responsible for each function? How will they physically move information and paper from one location to the other? When during the day and week do certain activities occur? Are there things that are currently being done that will no longer be necessary?

In some cases, resources currently available in the consolidated setting will not be readily available to both facilities. Are there resources that the elementary/junior high school will lose as a result of the new facility? Identifying those resources and making plans to adjust for this in advance of opening the high school can provide for a much smoother transition.

Recommendation 36:

Construct a model of the new high school and identify the most effective use of personnel, facilities, and services.

Once the model is constructed, the vision for the delivery of services at the new high school should be carefully compared to the plans for the high school, and plans should be adjusted to best meet the needs of the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1. The superintendent sets a date for the board, principals, and all key staff members to participate in a full-day brainstorming session where the activities of each functional area are described as they exist today and adjusted to show what they believe will exist when the high school is opened.	August 1998
2. The superintendent asks each staff member, in advance of the meeting date to list their critical functions showing current and future projected staffing needs, equipment, and process procedures.	August 1998
3. The superintendent facilitates the meeting and during the course of the day, constructs a paper model of the high school operation. The architect may wish to be involved in the meeting to hear and see first hand the implications.	October 1998
4. The superintendent and the architect review the model and make any required adjustments to the facility design.	November 1998
5. The board approves the facility design and makes the necessary budgetary preparations for staffing and equipping the new facility based on the model.	December 1998 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

While there will be considerable time and effort required of all parties involved in the process, there should be no additional cost for conducting this session. In the long-term, costly mistakes may be avoided.

B. MAINTENANCE

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD maintenance employees are responsible for cleaning the district's buildings, maintaining the grounds, and performing minor maintenance and repairs on HISD's buses. The Maintenance Department employs eight people in the following positions: one maintenance supervisor, one bus foreman, one grounds foreman that also performs part-time custodial work, and five full-time custodians.

The Maintenance supervisor is responsible for light building maintenance and the supervision of the department. The bus foreman is responsible for bus preventive maintenance, assisting with cafeteria clean up, and maintaining athletic fields. The grounds foreman maintains all HISD grounds and cleans rooms in the portable buildings and reports directly to the Maintenance supervisor. The five custodians report to the Maintenance Supervisor and are responsible for assuring all main HISD facilities are clean.

Building maintenance, with the exception of minor repairs, is currently contracted to a private vendor. The vendor primarily performs maintenance repairs on the district's air-conditioning units.

Exhibit 4-4 details the Maintenance Department expenditures by major category for the last three years.

Exhibit 4-4
HISD Maintenance Department Expenditures by Major Category
1994-95 through 1996-97

Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage Change
Labor	$132,553	$156,588	$158,781	19.8%
Utilities	$141,923	$149,872	$169,295	19.3%
Supplies	$43,480	$44,520	$53,249	22.5%
Contract repairs	$16,840	$26,104	$19,307	14.6%
Insurance	$14,838	$12,370	$12,615	-15.0%
Equipment	$3,332	$7,745	$9,621	188.75%
Other	$2,610	$917	$1,554	-40.5%
Total	**$355,576**	**$398,116**	**$424,422**	**19.4%**

Source: HISD business manager.

Exhibit 4-5 presents the actual Maintenance Department expenditures for HISD and selected peer districts for 1996-97.

Exhibit 4-5
HISD and Selected Peer District Maintenance Department Expenditures
1996-97

District	Total Expenditures
Rio Vista	$1,202,918
Clifton	$604,758
Cisco	$472,494
Early	$447,411
Hamilton	**$424,422**
De Leon	$326,432
Valley Mills	$271,361

Source: HISD and survey of peer districts.

FINDING

Principals and teachers interviewed were very supportive and complimentary of the Maintenance Department. They stated that maintenance employees respond to requests in a timely manner and produce quality work.

In response to the written survey, maintenance was the third highest rated function in HISD by the teachers and the fourth highest rated by the parents **(Exhibit 4-6)**.

Exhibit 4-6
Parents' and Teachers' Grades of HISD Functional Areas and Overall

Functional Area	Parents' Grade	Teachers' Grade
Personnel	4.25	4.24
Transportation	4.22	4.71
Instruction	4.19	4.82
Maintenance	***4.15***	***4.39***
Custodial	4.13	3.71
Overall District Performance	4.13	4.18
Staff Development	4.04	4.00
Finance	4.02	4.05
Purchasing	4.00	4.21
Planning and Budgeting	3.91	4.16
Technology	3.81	4.03
Food Service	3.56	3.87

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

COMMENDATION

Maintenance personnel provide quality service to HISD.

FINDING

As noted earlier, the current facility has 137,513 square feet. HISD's five full-time custodians and one part-time custodian maintain the facility and work almost exclusively during school hours.

Custodial cleaning responsibilities are divided into five specific areas of the building. Each custodian is responsible for all cleaning activities in the area to which he or she is assigned.

During interviews and in responses to the written survey, teachers consistently criticized the custodial services. It was the lowest rated department in the survey for teachers **(Exhibit 4-7)**. Teachers consistently commented that the classrooms were dusty and waste baskets not always emptied.

Exhibit 4-7
Teachers' Grades of HISD Functional Areas and Overall

Functional Area	Teachers' Grade
Instruction	4.82
Transportation	4.71
Maintenance	4.39
Personnel	4.24
Purchasing	4.21
Overall District Performance	4.18
Planning and Budgeting	4.16
Finance	4.05
Technology	4.03
Staff Development	4.00
Food Service	3.87
Custodial	***3.71***

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Parents were less critical of the custodial functions, rating it fifth out of the twelve categories. Interviews with HISD personnel indicated that the size of the assigned areas is primarily determined by the physical abilities of each custodian. Many school districts assign custodians based upon specific square footage allocations along with the type of surfaces and areas to be cleaned. The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), using widely accepted industry standards, has developed cleaning guidelines or standards for schools that a district can tailor to its needs depending upon the type of facility, facility use, and types of surfaces to be cleaned **(Exhibit 4-8)**. These standards identify the type of facility, the daily use, the types of surfaces to be cleaned, and an estimate of the time necessary to complete each task.

Exhibit 4-8
Examples of Recommended Custodial Work Standards
Established by the Association for School Business Officials

Space	Service	Unit Measure	Work Rate Time
Classrooms (average size)	routine clean	850 sq. ft.	24 minutes
Offices - resilient floor	routine clean	1,000 sq. ft.	24 minutes
Offices - carpet	routine clean	1,000 sq. ft.	24 minutes
Floors	dust mop	1,000 sq. ft.	12 minutes
	damp mop	1,000 sq. ft.	20 minutes
	spray buff - daily	1,000 sq. ft.	20 minutes
	spray buff - weekly	1,000 sq. ft.	40 minutes
	spray buff - monthly	1,000 sq. ft.	120 minutes
	light furniture scrub	1,000 sq. ft.	240 minutes
	medium furniture scrub	1,000 sq. ft.	300 minutes
	heavy furniture scrub	1,000 sq. ft.	400 minutes
Bathrooms	3 or less commodes, urinals, and wash basins	each	4.5 minutes
	more than 3	each	3.0
Stairs	damp mop	1 flight	12 minutes
	wet mop	1 flight	35 minutes
	hand scrub	1 flight	48 minutes
	dust handrails	1 flight	2 minutes
	dust treads	1 flight	6 minutes
Walls	wash	1,000 sq. ft.	210 minutes
	wash heavy soil	1,000 sq. ft.	290 minutes
Blinds	dust	each	15 minutes
	damp dust	each	30 minutes
	wash	200 sq. ft.	340 minutes
Windows - single pane	wash	1,000 sq. ft.	240 minutes
Windows - multi-pane	wash	1,000 sq. ft.	320 minutes
Light fixtures - flourescent	dust	4 ft.	5 minutes
Light fixtures - egg crate	wash	4 ft.	40 minutes
Light fixtures - open	wash	4 ft.	20 minutes
Light fixtures - incandescent	dust	each	5 minutes
Light fixtures - incandescent	wash	each	15 minutes

Source: Custodial Methods and Procedures Manual, ASBO.

According to ASBO's standards, custodial staffing should be based upon an expected average productivity of 2,500 square feet per staff-hour of work or 20,000 square feet during a typical 8-hour cleaning period. This formula will vary depending upon the type of flooring, size of storage areas, and other variables that reduce total square footage of a facility to actual space to be cleaned.

The district currently employs five full-time custodians and a grounds foreman that also functions as a part-time custodian. Based on HISD's current 137,513 square feet of facilities, this standard would equate

to approximately 6.5 custodians. However, the review team noted that not all of this square footage is designed to be cleaned on a regular basis, such as storage areas. Furthermore, cleaning is inhibited by the fact that most cleaning is performed during the daytime hours while teachers and students occupy the facilities. This limits the custodians ' ability to thoroughly clean certain areas or take the time necessary to complete time-consuming tasks. Evaluation of the effectiveness of custodians is also difficult under these circumstances.

Staffing formulas will also be important in determining the number of custodians needed to clean the new high school.

Recommendation 37:

Redesign custodial cleaning areas of responsibility using industry standards, hire and additional custodian, and shift some custodial work schedules to hours when school is not in session.

HISD should initially evaluate the space in the existing facility compared to the ASBO standards and determine which standards apply and the actual square footage to be cleaned. Once this calculation has been made, the number of actual custodians can be determined, but for the purposes of this recommendation, the review team estimates that one additional full-time custodian is required.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Maintenance supervisor redesigns the cleaning zones of the school in terms of industry standards.	September 1998
2.	The supervisor requests that an additional custodial position is filled.	October 1998
3.	The supervisor advises the custodians of their new areas of cleaning responsibility.	November 1998
4.	The supervisor assigns new custodians to afternoon or night shifts.	November 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual salary for one full-time custodian is $15,073 plus 15 percent in benefits, for a combined total cost of $17,334 per year.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Redesign custodial cleaning areas of responsibility.	$17,334	$17,334	$17,334	$17,334	$17,334

C. FOOD SERVICE

BACKGROUND

The mission of a school food service program is to provide an appealing and nutritionally-sound breakfast and lunch to students and to operate on a cost recovery basis. Several success factors can be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a school food service operation. These include a high ratio of meals per labor hour (MPLH), minimization of food cost and waste, maximum participation in breakfast and lunch programs, high nutritional value and variety of meals, minimal wait time for student service, and financial self-sufficiency.

The National School Lunch Program was authorized in 1946 by the United States Congress to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritional agricultural products. The food service program is funded through a combination of federal subsidies for students from low income families and the personal contribution of students who are able to pay. The federal government also provides schools with surplus food products through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD food service employees cook, heat, chill, and serve pre-prepared and made-from-scratch foods. These same employees also perform stocking, dishwashing, cashiering, and kitchen clean-up functions at various times during the day. HISD employs seven people in the Food Service Department, one in each of the following positions: supervisor, assistant supervisor/meat cook, vegetable cook, snack bar operator/cook, breads and desserts cook, floater, and dishwasher. Most staff handle functions in addition to their main job responsibilities.

The supervisor, who was promoted to this position 3 years ago, and the assistant supervisor/meat cook, work 8-hour days. The dishwasher works only 5-hour days and covers for others employees during breaks in addition to the dishwashing. The remaining employees work 7 hours per day. The supervisor is responsible for human resource management, human resource development, budget development, local, state and federal regulatory program compliance, and fiscal accountability.

The elementary/junior high school principal certifies all district students, for eligibility in federal lunch and breakfast programs. An application is mailed to the household of each student during the summer before the school year. Prior to the school year, the district receives a list from the Texas Department of Human Services of all students who are automatically eligible since their families receive some form of state assistance. The principal reviews all additional applications for eligibility.

HISD participates in the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) XII food purchasing cooperative and purchases all food through the cooperative other than occasional items for specific events that are purchased from local vendors.

Parents and teachers were generally not complimentary of the food service function within HISD. In responses to the written survey, parents rated food service as the lowest rated function within HISD; teachers rated it second worst (**Exhibit 4-9**). Comments by both groups focused on lack of nutrition, repetition of menus, limited selection of items, and the small size of portions.

Exhibit 4-9
Parents' and Teachers' Grades of HISD Functional Areas and Overall

Functional Area	Parents' Grade	Teachers' Grade
Personnel	4.25	4.24
Transportation	4.22	4.71
Instruction	4.19	4.82
Maintenance	4.15	4.39
Custodial	4.13	3.71
Overall District Performance	4.13	4.18
Staff Development	4.04	4.00
Finance	4.02	4.05
Purchasing	4.00	4.21
Planning and Budgeting	3.91	4.16
Technology	3.81	4.03
Food Service	***3.56***	***3.87***

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Students were not asked a similar question on their survey, and made no general comments about the food or the food service operation.

The Food Service department has made numerous attempts during the past several years to raise the level of participation in, and satisfaction with, the food being served. These initiatives include: food tastings by students, contests with prizes, free tickets to area attractions and movies, and giveaways such as Dallas Cowboys autographed footballs. The Food Service supervisor indicated that she had worked with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and teachers to design more appealing and nutritious menus.

Exhibit 4-10 details the Food Service Department revenues by major category for the last three years.

Exhibit 4-10
HISD Food Service Department Revenues by Major Category
1994-95 - 1996-97

Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1996-97 Percentage of Total	Percentage Change over the Period
Local and intermediate sources	$93,955	$91,423	$97,869	42.5%	4.2%
Federal reimbursement	110,223	105,145	129,731	56.3%	17.7%
State matching	2,619	2,920	2,806	1.2%	7.1%
Total	**$206,797**	**$199,488**	**$230,406**	**100%**	

Source: HISD annual financial audits, 1994-97 and TEA Child Nutrition Programs District Profile.

Exhibit 4-11 details the Food Service Department expenditures by major category for the last three years. Food cost has seen the largest increase, 13.2 percent over the three-year period. HISD used to bid its food separately, but according to the Food Service supervisor, the per-item cooperative costs are much less than what HISD was able to obtain by bidding separately. Other expenditures include the cost of processing donated commodities, paper supplies, utilities, and equipment repairs.

Exhibit 4-11
HISD Food Service Department Expenditures by Major Category
1994-95 - 1996-97

Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Percentage of Total	Percentage Change over the Period
Food cost	$94,167	$79,048	$106,640	46.87%	13.2%
Labor	77,583	82,378	85,767	41.16%	10.5%
Equipment	0	14,345	5,015	3.24%	N/A
Contract food processing	0	0	2,137	0.36%	N/A
Other	16,184	16,132	17,661	8.37%	9.1%
Total	**$187,934**	**$191,903**	**$217,220**	**100%**	**15.6%**

Source: HISD business manager.

Compared to its peer districts, HISD ranks second lowest in the percentage of its budget spent on food service **(Exhibit 4-12)** with 4.0 percent of the total budget allocated to this department. HISD is also below both regional and state averages of 5.7 and 5.8 percent, respectively.

Exhibit 4-12
HISD and Peer District Food Service Department Expenditures
1996-97

District	Total Expenditures	Percentage of Total Budget
Early	$449,636	**7.4%**
De Leon	$271,021	7.2%
Cisco	$324,680	7.0%
Hico	$186,200	6.3%
Texas	**N/A**	**5.8%**
RESC XII	**N/A**	**5.7%**
Clifton	$314,787	5.7%
Rio Vista	$239,385	4.8%
Valley Mills	$128,074	4.7%
Hamilton	**$217,220**	**4.0%**
Goldthwaite	$142,432	3.9%

Source: WCL Enterprises Telephone Survey of Districts

Exhibit 4-13 describes HISD participation in breakfast and lunch over the past three years. Breakfast participation has remained the same, and lunch participation has increased only slightly.

Exhibit 4-13
HISD Breakfast and Lunch Participation
1994-95 through 1996-97

Meal	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Breakfast	20.83%	17.06%	20.80%
Lunch	49.14%	47.38%	50.70%

Source: TEA Child Nutrition Programs District Profile.

Exhibit 4-14 presents lunch participation information for HISD and selected peer districts. HISD ranks eighth of nine districts when compared to its peers regarding lunch participation. According to the Food Service supervisor, this figure is low due to the "open campus" policy at the high school which allows high school students to leave campus during the lunch period. For example, in the month of February 1998, which reflects a normal month of activity, high school student participation at lunch was only 20.03 percent.

Exhibit 4-14
HISD and Peer District Lunch Participation Information
1996-97

District	Lunch Participation
Hico	67.16%
De Leon	65.18%
Rio Vista	58.75%
Early	56.65%
Cisco	56.49%
Valley Mills	54.35%
Goldthwaite	50.87%
Hamilton	**50.70%**
Clifton	50.37%

Source: TEA Child Nutrition Programs District Profile.

Exhibit 4-15 presents breakfast participation information for HISD and selected peer districts. HISD ranks 4th of nine districts when compared to its peers regarding breakfast participation.

Exhibit 4-15
HISD and Peer District Breakfast Participation Information
1996-97

District	Breakfast Participation
Cisco	43.84%
Hico	32.02%
De Leon	22.34%
Hamilton	**20.80%**
Clifton	18.45%
Goldthwaite	17.31%
Rio Vista	14.57%
Early	12.82%
Valley Mills	10.62%

Source: TEA Child Nutrition Programs District Profile.

Breakfast and lunch prices have remained the same over the last three years. Breakfast prices are $0.30 for reduced, $0.50 for regular, and $1.00 for adults. Lunch prices are $0.49 for reduced, $1.25 for pre-K-5th grade, $1.75 for 6th-12th grade, and $2.25 for adults. HISD meal prices compared to federal reimbursable rates are provided in **Exhibit 4-16**.

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Exhibit 4-16
HISD Meal Prices Compared to Federal Reimbursable Rates
1996-97

Meal	Student Meal Type	HISD Price	Reimbursable Rate	Total Meals Served
Breakfast	Full price	$0.50	$0.1975	1,735
	Reduced price	$0.30	$0.7175	2,520
	Free	$0	$1.0175	29,971
Lunch	Full price - Pre-K through 5th grade	$1.25	$0.17	31,930 (*)
	Full price - 6th through 12th grade	$1.75	$0.17	(*)
	Reduced price	$0.40	$1.3575	7,911
	Free	$0	$1.7575	43,928

Source: TEA and HISD Food Service supervisor.
(*) NOTE: HISD does not routinely break out the meals served by elementary, junior high, and high school.

FINDING

The Food Service Department uses many of the services provided by RESC XII. The district is in a purchasing cooperative with RESC XII in which commodities are purchased and processed. Commodities are bulk food items, such as blocks of cheese, bulk meats and the like, that are given to school districts as part of the federal USDA Donated Foods Program. In 1996-97, HISD received $11,780 in donated commodities under this program.

Menus are planned on a monthly basis by the HISD supervisor, and nutritional values are calculated using nutritional value tables prepared and distributed through RESC XII. HISD meal recipes are reviewed by the RESC XII nutritionist to ensure they meet all nutritional requirements.

The Food Service supervisor and assistant supervisor also use many of RESC XII training programs available to the district.

The district's beef, pork, and turkey commodities are processed by three private vendors: Pierre Hudson, Goldkist, and Gorges. Processing commodities in this manner reduces the labor and food preparation requirements of many of the district's meals. The processed items are sent by the vendors to the warehouse in Arlington where the government commodities are stored. When commodity shipments are sent to HISD, shipments of processed food are also sent to the district.

COMMENDATION

The HISD Food Service Department is actively using RESC XII and other external resources to keep costs as low as possible and maximize effectiveness.

FINDING

HISD did not have a recycling program when the current Food Service supervisor was promoted to that position in 1994-95. On her own initiative, she started collecting the aluminum cans from the vending machines and from the fruit juices sold in the cafeteria and sells the cans. The money that is received from the sale of the cans is placed in an activity fund and is used to buy items for the cafeteria that are not included in the regular budget, such as a microwave oven for use by the students and additional tools and utensils for the cafeteria. According to the business manager, the monthly balance in this account ranges from $100 to $200.

COMMENDATION

The Food Service supervisor has demonstrated initiative in starting programs that are beneficial to HISD and to the environment.

FINDING

Section 361.425 of the Health and Safety Code requires school districts, among other governmental entitles, to recycle aluminum, steel containers, paper, cardboard, etc. However, since HISD has a population of less than 5,000 they are exempt from compliance if a recycling program puts a hardship on the district.

While the Food Service department recycles aluminum cans, it does not recycle any other items, such as the disposable dishes and utensils used in the cafeteria or the cardboard boxes in which various food items are delivered. The Hamilton County Extension Office initiated a recycling program and opened a recycling center in February 1998. The extension agent and the Food Service supervisor have had discussions regarding the county picking up the cardboard from the school but the county does not currently recycle plastic items. There is no cost to groups that participate in the recycling program with the Hamilton County Extension Office, however, groups do not receive reimbursement for the items recycled. This is the reason that the Food Service Supervisor has chosen to handle the aluminum can recycling on her own.

Recommendation 38:

Establish a more formal recycling program for all eligible items.

The Food Service supervisor and the Maintenance supervisor should work together with the business manager to develop a plan. The process could begin with the cardboard boxes and other items such as the plastic dishes and utensils could be added to the recycling program as soon as a buyer can be located.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service and Maintenance supervisors develop a plan and recommend it to the business manager and the superintendent.	October 1998
2.	The superintendent approves the plan and the program is initiated.	October 1998
3.	The supervisors continue to monitor the program and include items as the program expands.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with establishing the process. Some additional revenues may be associated with full implementation, but it is dependent on the level participation.

FINDING

HISD's meal participation for both breakfast and lunch has remained largely the same over the past three years. Although only limited information was available, the review team found that some additional revenues may be associated with full implementation, but is depending on the level participation. HISD has the opportunity to increase participation, particularly at the high school and with students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. For example, in the month of February 1998, which reflects a normal month of activity, high school student participation at lunch was only 20.03 percent.

Although HISD has an open campus, students may not use their cars over the lunch hour. There are however, two to three restaurants and convenience food located within a 10-minute walking distance. As a result, according to the Food Service supervisor, an average of only 80 reimbursable lunches daily are served to high school students each day.

Other districts have increased participation by offering brand name items and having special theme days.

In order to qualify for free or reduced-price meals, families must complete an application form detailing their financial situations and indicating the extent of their financial needs. Students of families deemed eligible due to financial conditions may receive breakfasts and lunches free or at a reduced price. At the beginning of each school year, the district gives an application to each student and offers instruction and assistance in filling out applications.

The district receives a list of students from the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Department of Human Services that automatically qualifies them for free- and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches, based on their qualification for other state assistance. A student on this list automatically qualifies for free and reduced-priced meals for the first 30 days of the school year, but they must complete an application to remain eligible for the remainder of the year. If HISD does not get an application from the students after the first 30 days, no effort is made by the district to re-qualify the student for a meal program. In contacting peer districts, the director of food service at Hico ISD, where free and-reduced-meal participation is critical to their budget, indicated that if an application was not received within a week, she personally follows up with the student.

Another contributor to lower participation is the location of vending machines outside the doors of the cafeteria. While vending machines can provide snack and drink alternatives to students, they should not, by law, compete with meal service. Many districts restrict access to vending machines to limited times of the morning and afternoon when the cafeteria is not in operation. Federal guidelines prohibit vending machine placement in cafeterias, and machines are supposed to be turned off during meal service.

During interviews with HISD personnel, the review team noted that high school students must wait 10 minutes after their last class before lunch before they can enter the cafeteria. During this waiting period, many choose to leave and eat elsewhere.

Food service was also the lowest rated function in the parent responses to the written survey and next-to-last in the teacher responses. Key reasons cited by both groups included lack of selection, limited nutritional content, and frequent menu repetition.

Recommendation 39:

Increase participation in the breakfast and lunch programs.

This recommendation involves two key components: getting students to eat in the cafeteria, and maximizing federal funds.

Manufacturers of food products, supplies, and equipment can provide promotional ideas as can RESC XII representatives and other school districts. Local restaurants should be solicited for ideas about how to sell their food in the school cafeteria or to sponsor theme days. The Hamilton Dairy Queen or the barbecue restaurant within walking distance of the school might jointly sponsor their items on a daily or weekly basis or participate in theme days. The schedule should be reviewed to determine alternatives that would eliminate the 10-minute wait time for high school students, and vending machine access should be limited to times that are not close to the breakfast and lunch hours.

HISD also should examine its processes for identifying and certifying all eligible students for free and reduced-price meals and transfer follow-up to the supervisor of Food Service.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service supervisor, the superintendent, and the principals discuss strategies and methods for increasing meal participation.	August 1998
2.	The supervisor, the elementary/junior high school principal, and the business manager discuss ways to certify more eligible students for federal meal programs.	August 1998
3.	The supervisor contacts food product manufacturers and local restaurant owners to request help in providing promotional giveaways, advertising of brand name foods, and sponsoring theme days.	Ongoing
4.	The supervisor conducts follow-up on potential applicants for federal meal programs.	September 1998

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the total revenue for 1996-97 of $230,406 and projecting a 5 percent increase each year in revenues and participation, HISD could generate $11,520 in additional gross revenues less food costs of $5,332, to net an additional $6,188 in revenues.

A higher rate of participation affects additional sources of revenue available to HISD. For example, for 1997-98 HISD is eligible to receive $663 per student in state compensatory funds for every child participating in the free- and reduced-price meal program. By increasing participation by 5 percent or bringing another 20 students into the program, HISD would receive an additional $13,260 in state compensatory funds.

The total revenue impact is $19,448 (serving more meals = $6,188 + additional compensatory funds = $13,260).

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Increase participation in the breakfast and lunch programs.	$19,448	$19,448	$19,448	$19,448	$19,448

FINDING

Participation is currently tracked manually as students pass through the cafeteria serving line during both breakfast and lunch. All students are assigned an identification number by the Food Service supervisor, which makes it easy to track the number of paid, free, and reduced-price meals served daily. Parents who wish to pre-pay meals may do so by sending a check. The student's identification number provides confidentiality to students receiving free and reduced-price meals since no one knows whether they have paid for a meal or are getting a free meal.

The Food Service supervisor has access to a computer in her office but does not have appropriate software to electronically track participation information in the serving line.

A number of districts use automated, point-of-sale systems that involve a pin pad on which the student punches in his or her number. This information is transferred via modem, to a central computer in food service that records the information and from which reports can be printed.

Recommendation 40:

Automate the system of recording meal participation.

Using electronic methods of tracking and reporting participation will reduce the time required to record and store information, while providing quick and easy preparation of reports and easy access to past reports and participation information. Since HISD already has extensive technology and cabling installed, there would be minimal conversion required to move to this type of system, and it would free up time for other tasks.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service supervisor and Technology coordinator solicit information on point-of-sale software and review the alternatives.	September 1998
2.	The supervisor and coordinator contact other districts to receive additional information on use and operation of the systems.	October - November 1998
3.	The supervisor and coordinator evaluate the systems and costs and recommend purchase of a system to the superintendent.	December 1998
4.	The coordinator issues a request-for-bid or purchases a system from the General Services Commission approved bid list.	January 1999
5.	The system is installed and becomes operational.	February - March 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Point-of-sale systems range from $4,000 to $10,000 for both hardware and software. One system that was priced and is installed in similar-sized districts would cost HISD $9,971 to purchase, plus $1,425 per year for annual maintenance.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Automate the system of recording meal participation.	($11,396)	($1,425)	($1,425)	($1,425)	($1,425)

FINDING

Students and teachers can pay for meals as they come through the cafeteria line and may also pre-pay for future meals. This practice jeopardizes the confidentiality of students who receive a free or reduced-price meal and slows meal service.

Other districts permit pre-payment but separate collection of pre-payments from the cafeteria altogether. A student or teacher makes payments in the school office or in their homeroom so that when students pass through the cafeteria line, no one knows who is paying and who is not and the line is not delayed. Some districts set up debit accounts for staff and teachers as well.

Recommendation 41:

Transfer responsibility for collecting meal payments and prepayments to either the school office, the business office, or the superintendent's office.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent designates a location for meal pre-payment.	August 1998
2.	The person responsible at that location receives the payments and records them.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

D. SAFETY AND SECURITY

CURRENT SITUATION

The safety and security of students and teachers has become a critical issue on a national level. For many districts, safety and security is one of the fastest growing items in the budget. In 1996-97 the state started tracking expenditures for security and monitoring services as a separate expenditure item. HISD did not have any expenditures in the area of safety and security for 1996-97 (**Exhibit 4-17**).

Exhibit 4-17
HISD, RESC and State Safety and Security Expenditures
As a Percentage of Total 1996-97 Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Hamilton	RESC XII	State
Security and monitoring	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 1996-97.

FINDING

Based on the surveys of students, parents, principals, and teachers, safety and security is not viewed as a critical issue in HISD. In each group, at least 74 percent of the respondents agreed that HISD schools are safe and provide a secure learning environment (**Exhibit 4-18**). Parents are not as certain about the safety of the schools, but still have very positive views about overall school safety.

Exhibit 4-18
HISD Survey Responses to Question
"Are Your Schools Safe?"

Response	Principals	Teachers	Students	Parents
Strongly Agree/Feel Safe	50%	31%	66%	19%
Agree/Feel Safe	50%	59%	29%	55%
Total	**100%**	**90%**	**95%**	**74%**

Source: Responses to written survey administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Due to the geographic location of HISD, the heavy involvement of the community in the district, the existence of only one campus, and the size of the student population, the need for security has not yet become an issue. There have been only two arrests for fighting during the current year.

The district uses the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department to assist them in the event of any problems. For example, the county was instrumental in handling a recent bomb threat that proved to be a hoax. The district also contracts with the county for the DARE drug program.

Although the district has a discipline management plan and a student code of conduct, due to the relatively mild and infrequent criminal offenses the district has not developed a formal safety and security plan. HISD does have standard fire and evacuation drills as a part of their routine, which are elements of such a plan, but this procedure does not provide a global view of school safety.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-17**, there is a gap between the degree of safety felt by parents as opposed to the principals, students, and teachers. The parents may be unaware of the safety measures that are in place that the principals, teachers, and students take for granted. In addition, some of the parents in one of the focus group meetings expressed concern about the manner in which the evacuation was handled during the recent bomb threat.

During focus group sessions and in response to the survey, parents expressed concerns about the freedom of students to come and go as they please. A number of parents said they thought that many of the students observed leaving the campus are driving cars. Community members and parents wanted to know where they are going and what they are doing.

While many people expressed concerns about the dangers of students leaving campus during the day, as many said the students needed the freedom to move about.

The students interviewed or responding to the survey indicated that since the lunch room is so crowded and since many leave for jobs around lunch time, they felt they should be free to come and go as long as they are attending class as required and their grades are not suffering.

The superintendent pointed out that getting from the school to the athletic field for physical education class, sporting events, or other outside activities, as well as when students leave campus, involves going across State Highway 281, which is a busy thoroughfare. There is a crossing guard present at the intersection before and after school and the board recently approved the hiring of a crossing guard for this intersection during the lunch period.

The current site-based decision-making plans defines the composition of the district and campus committees. In each one, teachers and parents are an integral part of the committee. The responsibility for addressing concerns and reviewing campus requirements could fall within each of these committees.

Recommendation 42:

Expand the role of the site-based decision-making committees to include campus safety.

The district should build measures of prevention, intervention, and enforcement into their approach to safety and security, drugs, and discipline management issues. The SBDM committees could hear parental concerns and develop recommendation that address key issues.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The SBDM committees expand the current SBDM plan to include review of safety measures for the district and on each campus.	October 1999
2.	The SBDM committees receive input from parents, teachers, students, and law enforcement representatives.	November 1998-February 1999
3.	The SBDM committees recommend a safety and security policy, review it with HISD staff, and present it to the board for approval.	March - April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

The district maintains an "open campus" policy. This policy refers to the ability of high school students to leave the campus during the lunch period from 12:28 p.m. to 1:03 p.m. They cannot drive their cars but can walk to several area restaurants or stores to purchase their lunch.

In addition to this open lunch period, school buildings are open and most doors are unlocked at all times during the day. It appears that anyone at any time could walk through any door going into or out of the campus. Members of the review team also noted that it was difficult to determine which entrance was the main entrance to the schools.

The elementary/junior high school has a sign-in process and gives visitors badges. The high school has neither. All teachers and employees have keys; they are turned in to their supervisor at the end of the school year or when the individual terminates employment. No board members have keys. There is one additional set that is made available to any group that is approved to use the facilities. The group must return the keys upon completion of their use of the facilities.

Recommendation 43:

Monitor access in and out of the school and restrict access during the day to one primary entrance that is clearly marked.

There should only be one door accessible by the public for each school, and those doors should lead to the main office. A sign-in process and visitor badges should be required at both schools.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The SBDM committee reviews the policy of access to and from the campus.	September - December 1998
2.	The committee recommends a policy to the board for review and approval.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Doors are currently equipped with panic hardware, therefore no additional cost is involved in locking doors. The only additional costs would be for badges for visitors, which should be a nominal amount.

FINDING

The school has a one-way intercom system that allows the principal's office in the elementary/junior high school or in the high school to contact a teacher's classroom and listen to the response. In the event of a school-wide problem (such as the recent bomb threat) or a problem in the classroom, such as an illness or discipline problem, there is no a way for the teacher to contact the office.

HISD evaluated the possibility of installing a two-way intercom system several years ago. The proposed cost at that time was approximately $50,000. The district has not reviewed that idea recently nor have they evaluated other options such as having cellular telephones placed in selected strategically located classrooms so that teachers could reach them. Portable telephones are available with a "family" networking feature that links multiple telephones and acts like two-way radios and/or cellular telephones.

Recommendation 44:

Establish a two-way communications system in classrooms.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager and the principals, in coordination with the SBDM committees, solicit information about possible alternatives for two-way communication in classrooms.	September 1998
2.	The SBDM committees presents its recommendation to the board for review and approval.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Until all alternatives have been evaluated, it is impossible to determine the actual cost. However, if the district uses the cellular telephone alternative, based upon the placement of 10 cellular telephones throughout both schools, the cost of purchasing the telephones (one-time price of $100 for each telephone = $1,000) and using them as two-way radios (operational cost of $50/month/unit x 10 units x 12 months = $6,000) would be $7,000 for the first year and $6,000 in each succeeding year.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Establish a two-way communication system in classrooms	($7,000)	($6,000)	($6,000)	($6,000)	($6,000)

E. DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

CURRENT SITUATION

Each school has a student handbook that includes a code of conduct for all the students at the elementary, junior high, and high school level. The Code of Conduct includes key points of the discipline management plan, and the Code of Conduct has been updated annually at all levels. The handbook includes a requirement for the student, parent, and teacher to sign and acknowledge the discipline requirements.

HISD maintains a three-tiered approach to discipline management. A student who violates the Code of Conduct receives an in-school suspension, or detention hall, for each of the first three offenses. In the high school, this detention hall is served in the morning before school begins, and in the elementary/junior high school, the detention is served in the afternoon after school has been completed.

The next level of discipline is off-campus suspension (OCS). The district has a portable building behind the school, and one-half of the building is set aside for OCS students. A student receives OCS for either serious

or persistent misbehavior, i.e., the student has already had three detention hall assignments, or for a one-time incident that is not serious enough to merit alternative education program placement. **Exhibit 4-19** and **Exhibit 4-20** show the number of students and total days in OCS at the high school and elementary/junior high school levels.

Exhibit 4-19
HISD Students Receiving OCS Assignment at the High School
1997-98

Reason	Number of Students	Percentage of Total Students	Number of Days Suspended
Serious or persistent misbehavior	79	31.4%	312
Other	17	6.8%	26

Source: Principal, Hamilton High School, HISD.

Exhibit 4-20
HISD Students Receiving OCS Assignment at the Elementary/Junior High School
1997-98

Reason	Number of Students	Percentage of Total Students	Number of Days Suspended
Serious or persistent misbehavior	38	5.6%	141
Other	0	0%	0

Source: Principal, Hamilton elementary/junior high school, HISD.

The final level of discipline is the alternative education program (AEP) placement. During the 1997-98 year only five high school students received assignment to this program, which is held in the other half of the portable building that also houses the OCS students. Three students received 15-day assignments to AEP for alcohol violations, and two students received assignment to AEP for more than 20 days each for serious misbehavior such as fighting or theft. The AEP is staffed with one full-time teacher and one aide. When no students are assigned to the AEP, these individuals are used in a regular classroom.

FINDING

The district has a discipline management plan for each school. The high school plan was revised extensively in 1994 by a committee chosen by the principal which included parents, students, and teachers. Since that time only minor revisions and grammatical changes have been made. The high school principal indicated that during the summer before the 1998-99 year, he plans to convene another committee to update the plan to address key issues such as alcohol, tobacco, and fighting.

The discipline management plan at the elementary/junior high school has not been updated since first established in the early 1990's.

During interviews with teachers and students there were several concerns mentioned regarding the manner in which discipline was administered. In response to an open-ended student survey question which asked the respondent to identify which three things he or she liked least about the school, several students indicated that they felt that the high school principal was overly aggressive in enforcing many "petty rules and regulations."

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During a focus group meeting with teachers and, in individual teacher responses to the written survey, serious concerns were raised about the consistency with which discipline is administered. Some teachers said that although the district has a discipline management plan it is not always followed by the school principals. For example, one student brought alcohol to school and was given a two-week suspension while another brought a gun and was given a one-week suspension. Teachers also indicated that there was a lack of uniformity in the reasons for which a student is assigned to detention hall.

During interviews with board members, teachers, and parents, it was noted that there is a conflict between the high school principal and the high school counselor over the way discipline is handled. The perception of those interviewed was that this conflict has led to uncertainty and a lack of uniformity in the administration of discipline.

Exhibit 4-21 indicates that the teachers and the parents do not believe that schools properly handle discipline problems. Thirty-one percent of parents do not agree with the manner in which the schools are handling behavioral problems, and 34 percent of teachers feel the same way.

Exhibit 4-21
HISD Survey Responses to Question
"Do Schools Properly Handle Discipline Problems?"

Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply	No Opinion
Parents	16%	40%	21%	10%	5%	9%
Teachers	21%	38%	26%	8%	3%	5%

Source: Responses to written survey administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

Recommendation 45:

Update the discipline management plan at both schools and communicate the key elements of the plan to parents and teachers.

The district should post a summary of the plans on its Internet web site and/or publish information in the local newspaper. Principals should write periodic columns for the local newspaper to highlight HISD's discipline management policies. Like with the Code of Conduct, parents and students should be required to sign and return a statement indicating receipt of the plan.

In-service training should be conducted for teachers at each school to inform them of key elements of the plan and address any concerns about inconsistency in its application.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The principals, with the input from parents, teachers, and students, update the campus discipline management plans.	July 1998
2.	Principals publish summaries of the plans in the local newspaper and post on the district's website.	September 1998
3.	Principal publish periodic articles and website information on the plans and their application for the community.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

F. TRANSPORTATION

CURRENT SITUATION

HISD provides regular and special transportation service to students living more than two miles from the school they attend or a shorter distance if a safety hazard exists. Transportation service includes home to school service, as well as vocational and extracurricular transportation such as athletic events and field trips. The state reimburses the district for regular, special, and Career and Technical education (CATE) bus routes but does not pay for either extra- or co-curricular transportation or for the purchase of school buses.

During 1996-97, HISD's total mileage was 172,660, of which 144,477 was for regular education routes and 25,183 was for special education routes (**Exhibit 5-22**). Approximately 23 percent of the HISD regular school bus program mileage was for extra- or co-curricular travel and, therefore, not reimbursed by the state.

Exhibit 4-22
HISD Mileage Summary
1996-97

Mileage Type	Regular Program Mileage	Special Education Mileage	Total Mileage	Percentage of Total
Route	114,560	18,934	133,494	77.3%
Extra/co-curricular	32,717	6,049	38,766	22.5%
Other	200	200	400	0.2%
Total	**147,477**	**25,183**	**172,660**	**100%**

Source: HISD Transportation Department.

The district has seven regular education routes and two special education routes. Students are picked up at individual stops on each route. A total of 85 students are transported to school in the morning, or 9 percent of all students, and 147 students are transported home in the afternoon, or 16 percent of all students (**Exhibit 4-23**).

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Exhibit 4-23
HISD Routes, Length of Routes, and Number of Students Transported by Route
1997-98

		Number of Students Transported	
Route/Bus Number	**Length of Route (one way)**	**Morning**	**Afternoon**
1	49.9 miles	24	24
3	29.7 miles	6	17
4	55.7 miles	8	11
5	32.0 miles	7	14
6	82.0 miles	15	28
8	40.9 miles	12	17
12	30.0 miles	13	36
Total		**85**	**147**

Source: HISD.

The district maintains a fleet of 21 vehicles: 16 diesel-powered buses, two gasoline-powered buses, two pick-up trucks, and one 12-passenger van. Thirteen of the buses hold a maximum of 47 passengers, two hold 35 passengers, two hold 19 passengers, and one is used exclusively to transport band equipment. Fifteen of the buses are used in the regular education program and three in special education. According to the superintendent, the additional buses are kept by the district for parts, as back-up in case a bus breaks down, and for transportation to extra- and co-curricular events. Three of the regular education and two of the special education buses are less than 5 years old, four regular education and 1 special education buses are 5-10 years old, five regular education buses are 10-20 years old, and two regular education buses are greater than 20 years old (**Exhibit 4-24**).

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Exhibit 4-24
Size, Age, and Mileage of HISD Vehicle Fleet
May 1997

Bus/Vehicle Number	Number of Passengers	Purchase Date	Age of Vehicle (years)	Mileage
1 (gasoline)	47	1987	11	160,991
1 (diesel)	47	1997	1	21,665
2	47	1987	11	211,435
3	47	1991	7	67,872
4	35	1995	3	33,688
5 (diesel)	47	1994	4	58,853
5 (gasoline)	47	1979	19	84,413
6	47	1992	6	139,075
7	47	1985	13	98,519
8	47	1996	2	13,348
9	47	1981	17	54,066
10 (special education)	19	1989	9	85,131
11	47	1981	17	124,329
12	19	1991	7	90,826
13 (band equipment)	N/A	1974	24	158,787
14 (pick-up)	N/A	N/A	N/A	31,489
15 (pick-up)	N/A	N/A	N/A	72,085
16	47	1976	22	219,303
17 (van)	15	1983	15	87,632
18 (special education)	47	1994	4	61,729
19	35	1995	3	27,005
Average age of regular education buses other than the one used exclusively for band			9.1 years	
Average age of special education buses			6.5 years	

Source: HISD.

According to the former superintendent, the district's policy is to replace one regular education bus per year. Operating funds are used to pay for new regular education buses, and the Hamilton Area Special Education Cooperative pays for the special education buses. However, to save money to use on the new facility, no regular education bus purchases were budgeted for 1996-97.

The HISD Transportation Department has 11 employees in the following positions: one maintenance supervisor, one bus foreman, and 9 bus drivers. The maintenance supervisor is responsible for oversight of transportation operations. The bus foreman reports directly to the maintenance supervisor and is primarily responsible for assigning buses to drivers daily, performing preventive maintenance, and inspecting each bus daily.

HISD uses a contractor to provide major maintenance and repair services. The district has been using the same vendor for a number of years. In 1996-97, the contractor charged HISD $35,258.35 for parts and labor.

TEA provides funds for home-to-school and school-to-home transportation using a prescribed funding formula. This formula, referred to as linear density, takes the district's annual total two-mile eligible

students (180 days x number of 2-mile students) and divides it by the total annual mileage. Using this linear density ratio, TEA places the district into one of seven groupings and allocates funds accordingly. HISD is currently in linear density group 1 and is reimbursed at the rate of $.68 per mile by the state for regular transportation. This rate of reimbursement is established for a two-year period, 1995-96 and 1996-97, based upon the transportation costs of districts in 1993-94; consequently, the level of reimbursement lags the costs of service. For example, HISD's regular education costs in 1993-94 were $0.787 per mile versus $0.915 in 1996-97.

Special education reimbursement, however, is based upon the prior year's operation costs, and, as a result, reimbursement more closely tracks actual costs. A district is reimbursed for actual cost up to a maximum of $1.08 per mile. HISD special education costs per mile were $1.113 in 1996-97 so it receives the full $1.08 per mile reimbursement even though its current year costs have dropped to $1.044 per mile. However, since its cost of operations in special education have declined, next year HISD will only receive $1.044 per mile reimbursement.

Of its selected peer district, DeLeon, Goldthwaite, and Valley Mills are classified in the same linear density group 1 as Hamilton. **Exhibits 4-25** and **4-26** present the district's transportation costs in relation to those three peer districts. HISD's regular education costs are the second lowest of the four districts, and its special education costs are the second highest. Although the special education expenses are high, the total expense is still fully reimbursable.

Exhibit 4-25
HISD and Peer Districts Transportation Costs Per Mile for Regular Program Students
1996-97

District	Cost per Mile for Regular Transportation Program
De Leon	$0.894
Hamilton	**$0.915**
Goldthwaite	$1.081
Valley Mills	$1.088

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1996-97.

Exhibit 4-26
HISD and Peer District Transportation Costs
Per Mile for Special Program Students
1996-97

District	Cost per Mile for Special Transportation Program
Valley Mills	$0.315
De Leon	$0.948
Hamilton	**$1.044**
Goldthwaite	$5.489

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1996-97.

FINDING

In the survey of parents and teachers, both rated HISD's transportation function as the second highest of all the areas (**Exhibit 4-27**).

Exhibit 4-27
Parents' and Teachers' Grades of HISD Functional Areas and Overall

Functional Area	Parents' Grade	Teachers' Grade
Personnel	4.25	4.24
Transportation	***4.22***	***4.71***
Instruction	4.19	4.82
Maintenance	4.15	4.39
Custodial	4.13	3.71
Overall District Performance	4.13	4.18
Staff Development	4.04	4.00
Finance	4.02	4.05
Purchasing	4.00	4.21
Planning and Budgeting	3.91	4.16
Technology	3.81	4.03
Food Service	3.56	3.87

Source: Responses to written surveys administered by WCL ENTERPRISES, February 1998.

COMMENDATION

Both parents and teachers have confidence in the district's transportation program.

FINDING

The current practice or policy of buying a bus each year is not based upon an analysis of the length of routes nor the age and mileage of the fleet. According to the former superintendent, when he arrived in the district the fleet was very old and replacing one bus per year was an effort to upgrade the fleet.

School buses typically have a useful life between 10 and 15 years. TEA recommends a 10-year procurement cycle; however, most districts adopt a 10- to 12-year life for buses. With an aggressive maintenance program, however, buses can last up to 15 years. The average age of HISD's fleet is 9.1 years for regular education buses and 6.5 years for special education buses. The district's fleet of diesel buses are designed to have a minimum useful life of 15 years.

The federal government revised its safety requirements for school buses in April 1977. These revised requirements increased the standards for the crash-worthiness of school buses but did not apply to vehicles manufactured before April 1977 which are not required to meet the more stringent standards. The *National Highway Safety Administration Guideline #17* by the U.S. Department of Transportation recommends "replacing, consistent with the economic realities that typically face school districts, those school buses that are not manufactured to meet the April 1, 1977 FMVSS [Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard] for school buses..." HISD has two buses in this category, one of which is used exclusively for transporting band instruments and equipment.

HISD has seven regular education routes, yet it has 15 buses available for these routes that meet the 1977 safety standards. Six of the buses available are four years old or less, two are seven years old, one is nine years old, and two are 11 years old. Based on these ages and a 12-year replacement policy, HISD would not have to buy a new bus for at least another five years.

In looking at the regular education routes, none of the buses is at its capacity in any of the routes. HISD could reduce the size of the buses purchased to a 35-passenger vehicle.

Every quarter, the Texas General Services Commission does a survey of the four major manufacturers of school buses to determine an average price for each of the various sizes of school buses. According to data supplied by the Texas General Services Commission for the last quarter of 1997, the most recent for which data were available, the average cost of a 47-passenger diesel bus, the type HISD usually buys, was $40,000. The average cost for a 35-passenger bus was $38,000.

Recommendation 46:

Establish a regular bus procurement program to replace buses every 12 years.

A 12-year replacement cycle would allow HISD to defer another bus purchase for five years. With 15 buses available, HISD has more than enough spare buses to replace any that breakdown or need routine maintenance. If HISD retained the 11 buses that are less than 12 years old, it could sell the remaining buses.

Selling the four remaining buses would raise an estimated $500 for the one bus produced before 1977 and $1,000 each for the three buses produced after 1977, or $3,500 based on recent sales of inactive buses by the Houston ISD.

At a price of $40,000 per bus for the typical size purchased by the district, HISD could save $200,000 over the next five years by deferring bus purchases.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent recommends a multi-year bus replacement policy based upon the age, mileage, and condition of the fleet and reviews it with the business manager and the board.	October - November 1998
2.	The board adopts the policy, with any modifications, and the business manager adjusts the budget accordingly.	January 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Selling four buses would raise approximately $3,500 in the first year. Given the number of students per route, HISD should also consider purchasing smaller buses for several of the routes. Purchasing smaller vehicles could save an additional $2,000 on future purchases, according to the General Services Commission.

Based upon deferring purchases of new buses for five years. HISD could save $40,000 per year versus its current policy of purchasing one new bus per year.

Recommendation	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Establish a regular bus replacement policy.	$43,500	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000

APPENDIX A
COMMUNITY COMMENTS

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Appendix A

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

This appendix summarizes comments received from several group meetings which included the initial public forum held at the Hamilton ISD cafeteria on February 19, 1998 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and several focus group meetings. The focus group meetings were with community, civic and business leaders and parents. These comments are presented verbatim, to illustrate community perception of the Hamilton Independent School District (HISD) and do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

The community forum was an open meeting in which all members of the HISD community, including teachers, parents, students and all other members of the community were encouraged to attend. Tablets were placed all around the cafeteria, with each tablet representing a chapter of this report. People were asked to write any and all comments about HISD on the tablets.

Focus groups were assembled that included business and community leaders and parents. These groups were assembled with the assistance of the HISD staff and management. Members of the focus groups were also asked to comment on each function area represented in this report.

Several other interviews were held with other community and civic leaders, former school board members, former school teachers and administrators and business and religious leaders, representing various interest groups.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Important findings from these meetings include:

- The community generally feels that HISD does a good job of educating its students.
- The HISD teachers are highly regarded in the community and considered to be "top-notch".
- Given the age of the facilities, the community believes they have been well maintained.
- While there was some concern expressed about school safety, most feel that the schools provide a safe learning environment.
- The community feels that the Board of Trustees and district administration work well together for the good of the school system.
- Parents and community members expressed concern about the quality of the food served in the cafeteria, as well and the small portions served and the nutritional value.
- The school district and related activities are seen as the "center of the community".
- One of the most common comments made was that the district has too many coaches.
- Most believe that HISD has managed its resources very well as evidenced by lower tax rates.
- There was overwhelming approval of the district's computers and technology area as one of if not the best in the state.
- Many comments were made about the need for a second principal at the junior high and elementary level.

- Recent bond issues passage considered a positive by most focus group members.
- The district's transportation system is considered good by all focus group members.

The following sections are the actual comments made by participants by subject area.

District Organization and Management

The board is doing a great job.

Site base work is great. District often stalls, won't take their input and go with it.

School board seems to acknowledge the concerns of parents and I feel they truly can and do help with problems.

Best school board in years, truly committed.

Committed site-based committees: good ideas, often solicit input from teachers/faculty.

Great management from administration.

I feel there is an open door policy with administration.

Superintendent is a great leader and is always willing to listen!! But there is no follow through. Too political (honesty needed at all levels - administration and faculty).

Appears that administration and board are doing a good job.

Management is doing a good job.

I feel the superintendent has done a good job.

I feel we have had some better school boards in the past. I think the voters should be serious about voting and be sure to elect the best individuals for the District.

Education Service Delivery

Too little emphasis on reading, writing and math in K-4
Inconsistent application of disciplinary actions

Not preparing kids for other vocations not every kid cut out for Junior College

Need math tutorial program (have content mastery)

High School English
too much emphasis on literature
not enough on writing, grammar in high school

Incorporate study skills; they need to know where their resources are; show kids how to do it

Subs make more than entry level classroom aides - BAD!
(and at least aides do what you ask them to, while some subs don't)

Good lessons plans are critical for subs.

All campuses need to work together not in competition - We're all here for kids - the same kids!

Teachers are preparing our students well, high school student prepared for college.

GT Program great - would like to see GT students in same class - for their benefit.

Improved vocational opportunities
(above needed especially for special needs/slower students).

Trade school needed. For high school prepares for jobs and for future life. Anchorage, Alaska has such a place, it is called the King Career Center and provides opportunities for jobs.

Elementary has great programs - AR Shirley, Saxon math.

Hamilton is one of the best school systems with quality teachers who are energetic overachievers. Believes that Hamilton has one of the best groups of teachers in the State.

Overall the teachers are doing a good job.

High rate of students who continue on to college and do well.

High level of ACT SAT scores.

Good gifted and talented program.

Do not have a good offering of foreign language programs.
Science program may need to be looked at. Students seem to have a little problem with science in college.

Large number of exchange students who are doing well. Educated a lot of immigrant children who could not speak English.

Site based decision committee is a functional group and not just a name. May have grown too much. Some teachers expect and participate too much.

When they were looking for a new principal the teachers interviewed the principal candidates. Does not think that was a good idea.

Do not think there are too many coaches. All coaches teach classes also. (most of them do)

No choir program, no drama program, art teacher was reassigned, but still have a lot of coaches and high budget associated with the athletics program.

Estimate that 90-95 percent of students are involved in extracurricular activities.

Delighted to have two counselor positions. The Spanish class is too large, approximately 40 people.

The District does not spend enough time in the lower grades teaching reading, writing, and math. The State mandates too many classes reducing instruction time in the three basic disciplines.

Probably weak in some areas but do not know what those areas might be.

Science background is weak when children get into college.

High school science is weak. Elementary and Junior High science programs are good.

The district should consider another principal position. Current work load is too large for two principals.

Have heard that some teachers are teaching at a higher level than they are qualified for.

The District has too many coaches.

The District is offering so many sports that the number of coaches is OK.

Have approximately 700 kids in 2nd through 8th grade, principal is over worked in relation to the high school principal. Junior high schedule rivals high school schedule.

Teachers are sometimes teaching in areas that are not their first choice. Teaching performance is suffering from this.

Teachers are good but classes are overcrowded reducing the one on one attention many students need.

Fortunate to have the experienced educational staff employed in the District.

TAAS scores are great. High percentage of students who go on to college and excel.

My kids graduated from this District and can compete with kids from any other district in the State.

Felt good about the education my children have received in Hamilton ISD.

High percentage of students who do go on to graduate.

The teachers are good overall, but do not always listen and respond to parent concerns as proactively as they should.

The quality of some of the substitute teachers is inadequate. The substitute screening process should be analyzed.

Concerned with hiring teachers on emergency certificate for long periods of time. (e.g. two or three years)

Community Involvement

Very good community/parent involvement

Good technology program

General public does not understand a lot of the technical jargon. School needs to do a better job of explanation.

If the general public would come to school board meetings they would understand! Ask questions folks!

Community and parents are behind our school. However, I'd like to see a well-organized parent volunteer program to help augment our afternoon tutorial programs at the elementary/junior high levels.

Currently have parent volunteers on a regular basis. I would like to see it more organized school wide.

Great parent volunteer program in kindergarten

CTC courses in school - good

Cafeteria made available to community - good

Publicity on academics and athletics - good

Lack of participation in community and with teachers until something controversial appears

School board has opened Central Texas College for no building fees. Loves the coordination between the District and the College. Classes include credit and non credit classes, early admission classes, conversational Spanish, upholstery class etc.

Newspaper keeps public in tune with Hamilton ISD events. Radio is also a good source of information for the community.

Kept well informed about good and not so good things. Hamilton paper recently reported on discipline problem.

Site based decision committee has helped to make the community more involved.

School is the center of the community. The building is constantly used by civic groups, college, and GED classes etc.

Community involvement in the last bond issue was handled very well.

Good fellow program helps with lists from teachers for school nurse to identify kids with needs.

Community input was great to send the school band to inauguration. Raised over $75,000 in about two months.

Did not receive any help, support, and encouragement from senior level administration on the passage of the bond issue. However, teachers and principals were extremely helpful in the bond issue.

Administration is not always diplomatic with opposing views.

School board should be more open with what is going on in the board meetings.

School has been cooperative with providing facilities for community activities.

The community had a lot of input in the location of the new school.

The District has opened doors to facilities for little dribblers.

Personnel Management

Subs need to be more informed as to what is expected of them. More initial instruction than presently given to qualify a substitute.

Subs are trained and can't take the job until they are

Custodial work done in the evenings would be more cost effective, less wasted time (breaks). (Also, it's not always done in the day time because other jobs seem to come up and keep it from being done.)

Classrooms are mopped once a year

Sickness outbreaks - controlled by better and more effective room disinfecting and cleaning

Jr. High custodian does good job in regular cleaning and deep cleaning

Head of maintenance is quick to help and meet needs of all staff

Need covered areas and better drainage around old and new gym. (Kids have wet feet)

[The elementary school principal] has too many teachers to supervise!

Goal oriented and growth plans needed for administration.

Say what you mean, do what you say

Stand behind faculty

Administration does stand behind faculty!

The large number of elementary and junior high students may warrant an additional principal position or an assistant principal.

Site-based management now has teacher involvement in the personnel selection. Not sure if that is a good thing or not.

Many teachers are from this community. Many teachers have children in the District.

Have teachers on a waiting list of qualified teachers. The teachers are high on the socioeconomic list in the Hamilton community.

Should consider another principal position.

The District has too many coaches.

Elementary has only two PE teachers who are overloaded.

Need more full time PE people who do not coach.

The coaches are educators as well as coaches.

I believe the coaches have instilled a positive attitude among students. I think the coaches are great.

Coaches prioritize their coaching before education.

Students in the fourth grade must be classified as either athletes or non-athletes.

Have surveyed other districts and do not believe the number of coaches is out of line. The survey revealed that the band director and science teachers are the most over worked positions.

I believe there is a tremendous morale problem among High School teachers that is negatively affecting the students. There is an overall lack of coordination among high school teachers and administrators.

District personnel must be careful in a community of the size of Hamilton not to let personal agendas interfere with professional decisions.

Financial Management

Employees pay scale should correlate to duties performed

A clearer and fairer amount of money should go into each grade level or program. Currently - spend until told to quit.

Fund balance is over $1 million. What is wrong with that? (This is a result of good decisions being made by Board, Superintendent and Business Manager!)

Believes Hamilton ISD has one of the lowest tax rates in this part of the state.
Board is active in the community, involved, serious and comm.

Board reflects the conservative nature of the community. School Board and Administration have done a wonderful job of making the most of the funds available. District is not wasteful, but does spend the money to get what the District needs. Careful management.

Have no knowledge of anything but have heard that the nine school special education co op budget has quite a lot of money and cannot determine how and where the money is being spent.

Earns over $100,000 in interest on the special education money.

Have three special education schools in the community that are generating a lot of money.

The request for the Comptroller audit illustrates that a concern of financial policy exists.

Seems to be confusion in the community, and sometimes even among board members, as to exactly how much money is in the fund balance.

The District does not charge the community for utilities.
I think they invest reserve funds appropriately.

The district should inform the public more about issues in this area. If the public was more informed about legislation governing financial decisions they would be less critical.

The Hamilton ISD tax rate is one of the lowest in the state and the District is doing a good job with financial decisions.

The school has been run very well with respect to financial decisions. The District has a low tax rate and a healthy fund balance.

Facilities Use and Management

North end of campus is in great shape. Likes the idea of the bond issue and additional facilities.

Not enough space for everyone. Getting really crowded. District has done some good planning.

Maintenance takes a lot of pride in facilities. Facilities look great. Constant program of maintaining what they have. Maintenance does a lot of good work in the summer to keep facilities looking good.

Have faith in the board that they would not have asked to build additional facilities.

30 year old building does not look 30 years old.
New gym seems to be dirty a lot. Student restrooms are dirty.

Public restrooms at the new gym concession area are dirty.

Children's restrooms in the elementary and junior high are dirty.

Soap runs out in the boys restroom often.

Allowing eating in a gymnasium is a problem. Food mess is often not cleaned in the gym in a timely manner.

No one above the maintenance director really wants to be in charge.

Many water leaks in the new gym.

Air conditioning system seems to be dirty and causing dust problems.

Purchasing Services

Use local where possible

Computer Technology

Computers are obsolete before they get fully installed

Good technology

Constantly updating

I love the director and her assistant!

Would like to see earlier use of computers and more involved use at lower grade levels. Computer science classes at fifth and sixth grade level. More lab type classes for computers.

On the cutting edge! K - 12

I am proud of our technology

Jr. High - High School - special programs

Desire similar training to K-5. (A grant is being attempted)

Third grade kids need some supervised Internet time (so much information)
Would put Hamilton ISD up against any community of equal size in the state. Make training available to students, teachers and community.

Have a technology coordinator position who has done an outstanding job of obtaining grants.

Have a computer with internet access in every classroom.

Incorporate technology into all aspects of the curriculum.

Hardware and software installation and repair, writes grants, trains teachers

School Board will pay for technology training for any staff member.(including maintenance, food service, transportation, etc.)

Kids from school have come to my home to help train me on computers in the home.

Considered to be excellent.

Excellent!

Have my own kids teach me computer skills.

Hamilton has more exposure than other larger Districts I have seen.

Have increased approximately from 30 to 400 computers in the District. I believe the technology coordinator has been an excellent addition to the district in both education and obtaining grants.

Food Service

Lunch personnel do an outstanding job in preparation and serving

Little variety, pre-cooked foods

District is concerned that cafeteria make money - they should break even at most

Board encourages no major deficits in cafeteria

Food service director has appeared at several site-based meetings to make an effort to keep lines of communication open towards improving all conditions/food in lunchroom.

No variety and same food week in and week out. Every Friday in High School is baked potato and hamburger for example.

Good job with current guidelines!

Lunches not ready at 10:00 (my lunch hour)

Some lunches are good and some are bad. Some work on good lunches would be beneficial - cold milk.

Expand lunch room hour would be better!! Students need more time!

Waste (Styrofoam and forks - Kids can't even cut their pancakes)

The staff is always working hard.

Child complains that he does not get enough food. Small portions.

Lack of cafeteria space requires meals to be served from 10:30 – 2:00. That is too early and late.

Food is nutritious and reasonably priced.

Open campus is an issue of concern.

Quality of food is not good.

Range of meal times is too large. Kids eat too early and late.

Snack foods provided at breaks are not nutritious.

Breakfast servings are too small.

Meal times are too short to eat enough food.

Transportation

Need to outsource or get rid of transportation

Do not need to outsource transportation.

Transportation is very good

Nothing wrong with transportation. We have had a plan, for years, to improve fleet. At this time we have good buses thanks to Mr. Whitehead.

Good bus lane system in front of school
Good bus drivers. A lot of district teachers, administrators who are bus drivers

Not an issue.

Not an issue.

Not an issue.

Service has always been good. Only problem was resolved with one phone call.

Drivers are always concerned with child safety.

Buses are well maintained.

District is careful in driver selection and screening process.

Safety and Security

Too little too late!

Excellent on Elementary/Junior High Campus

Alternative education being updated and improved

Excellent DARE program at Elementary level

BIG Problem at High School. No discipline from administration.

UNSAFE CAMPUS!

I doubt that! (just because of recent incident)

I am an advocate for closed campuses

Site-based committee (district) has discussed closed campuses for several years

Review of security, safety and discipline plans needed.

I agree strongly.

Gut feeling telling me principal- High School - not in tune with the real world!

Safe, great school!!

Smoking during school hours on and off campus

We don't have gangs and guns - Good

Discipline needs to be consistent for all levels. Elementary has a discipline program which works well.

Never has really been a problem.

Have very little drugs in this district relative to others. Administration is right on top of the problem and gets good support from teachers.

Do not feel any concern regarding safety and security in the District or the community.

Not an issue.

Not considered a problem.

Do not have a good central communication system from the classroom to the office to be used in an emergency.

Heavy traffic around the school presents a safety problem.

District should communicate the appropriate traffic flow and parking areas to be used when picking up and dropping off students.

The Little Dribblers are often allowed in the gym weight room without supervision.

There is no alarm system in the cafeteria.

Many students went home with various parents and/or friends following the bomb threat with no organized evacuation plan.

None of the gyms have an intercom system.

Are any of the new gyms going to have a security system.

Discipline with students in the gym is lax.

APPENDIX B
SURVEY RESULTS

A REPORT FROM THE
TEXAS PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Appendix B

SURVEY RESULTS

This appendix provides a summary of the surveys conducted during the review, including a summary of some of the comments made to open-ended questions. The survey results presented here represent the perception of the respondents, and do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the review team or the Comptroller.

METHODOLOGY

During the week beginning February 23, 1998 all survey instruments were provided to all members of the survey groups either by personally handing them out, placing them in the internal HISD mail, or having students take them to their parents. The survey groups included:

- Teachers
- Employees (teacher and non-teachers)
- Principals
- Central and School Administrators
- Students (11th and 12th graders only)
- Parents (random sample of 150)

Each of the tests were self administered and all those surveyed were asked to return their surveys by March 5, 1998. However, due to a low response rate and a postal problem with the business reply envelopes, surveys received through March 19, 1998 were included in the results. All survey respondents were provided with a postage-paid reply envelope to provide maximum security and allow for candid, confidential responses.

Information requested from those surveyed included rankings of the various areas covered by the chapters included in this report. Additional space was provided for any other comments that the respondent cared to make. The data included in this appendix includes a portion of the comments and responses to the open ended questions.

The total amount of responses received in each of the categories surveyed is shown in **Exhibit B-1.**

Exhibit B-1
Number of Respondents by Group

Survey Group	Number of Respondents
Central and School Administrators	2
Principals	2
Teachers	39
Employees	49
Students	37
Parents	58

SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Overall, response to the survey was very good with a better than 50 percent response rate. In addition, there was a great deal of consistency in responses between parents, teachers, and students. Additional data is presented below.

Teachers

Surveys were distributed to all teachers by putting them in their mailbox at school. Each survey instrument was accompanied by a postage paid business reply envelope. A total of 39 teacher surveys were received. **Exhibit B-2** presents the actual number of completed surveys by race and gender and any other key factors.

Exhibit B-2
Demographic Data on Teachers

Gender	Number	Race	Number	Years at HISD	Number
Male	4	Anglo	34	1 to 5	24
Female	33	Other	1	Over 10	12
No reply	2	No reply	4	No reply	3

Employees

Surveys were distributed to all employees of the district, including teachers and principals. The employee survey was provided to teachers also because there were employee issues in this survey while most teacher survey questions were education related. A total of 47 employees responded to the survey. **Exhibit B-3** presents the actual number of responses by race, gender and other key factors.

Exhibit B-3
Demographic Data on Employees

Gender	Number	Race	Number	Status	Number
Male	2	Anglo	42	Teacher	30
Female	44	Other	3	Other	14
No reply	1	No reply	2	No reply	3

Principals/Central Administrators

Surveys were distributed to both principals, the special education coordinator and the superintendent. All responded to the survey.

Parents

Surveys were mailed or sent home with students to 150 parents of HISD students. The parents were randomly selected from the entire student population of HISD using the district's mailing list. A total of 58 surveys were received. **Exhibit B-4** presents the actual number of surveys received and provides demographic data.

Exhibit B-4
Demographic Data on Parents

Gender	Number	Race	Number	Residents	Number
Male	12	Anglo	44	1 to 5 years	27
Female	42	Other	9	6 to 10 years	16
No reply	4	No reply	5	Over 10 years	12
				No reply	3

Students

Surveys were distributed to all available students in the 11th and 12th grade in separate called meetings during the school day February 25, 1998. Each meeting was led by a member of the review team and the students were allowed to ask any questions. Upon completion of their surveys most students placed them in a box in the high school office and a member of the review team picked them up. A total of 37 students submitted a response. **Exhibit B-5** presents key demographic data on the students that responded.

Exhibit B-5
Student Demographics

Gender	Number	Race	Number	Grade	Number
Male	10	Anglo	33	11	12
Female	27	Other	4	12	25

Some of the significant findings are as follows:

- Administrators, principals, teachers and parents feel that the district has very good relationship with the community.
- Administrators, principals, teachers, parents and students believe that the district provides a quality education for its students.
- All groups agree or strongly agree that the schools are a safe learning environment.
- All groups agree that the schools are run in a cost effective manner.
- All groups agree that the school facilities are in good condition.

The survey asked all groups to rank the various functional areas of the district. The grades given (with 5 equal to an A and 1 equal to an F) by the teachers and the parents are presented in **Exhibit B-6**.

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Exhibit B-6
Ranking of Each Department/Functional Area by Parents and Teachers

Functional Area	Parents' Grade	Teachers' Grade
Personnel	4.25	4.24
Transportation	4.22	4.71
Instruction	4.19	4.82
Maintenance	4.15	4.39
Custodial	4.13	3.71
Overall District Performance	4.13	4.18
Staff Development	4.04	4.00
Finance	4.02	4.05
Purchasing	4.00	4.21
Planning and Budgeting	3.91	4.16
Technology	3.81	4.03
Food Service	3.56	3.87

It is interesting to note that the personnel function was rated the highest by the parents while the teachers graded instruction as the highest. Both the parents and the teachers graded the food service function as one of the lowest. The teachers graded the custodians as the lowest.

The remainder of this appendix provides the actual survey document for each survey group. In addition, the survey results for each question in the document is presented after each question. Data from this survey has been used throughout the report.

Central and School Administrator Survey

(Note: Data shown may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

The State Comptroller's office is conducting a Management and Performance Review of the Hamilton Independent School District. The three main objectives of the performance review are to enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, identify ways to improve management practices, and identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Input from central administration employees is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like you to complete the survey instrument and return it via the postage paid envelope provided no later than **March 5, 1998.**

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that school administrators in your district have accurate and unbiased input into the management and performance review process.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. Gender.

Male	Female	No reply
0%	50%	50%

2. How long have you been employed by the Hamilton ISD?

No reply	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%

3. Ethnicity.

No reply	Anglo	African Amer.	Hispanic	Other
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

4. Have you ever taught within the district:

Yes	No	No reply
0%	50%	50%

5. Department within the district where you are employed.

Admin. Services	**Adult Education**	**Special Ed. Pop.**	**Federal Programs**
Personnel	**Accounting**	**Purchasing/MIS**	**Food Service**
Transportation	**Maintenance**	**Other**	

In the interest of preserving the identity of the respondents no answers are provided to question 5.

For the following questions use the grades **A, B, C, D or F** to indicate Hamilton ISD's performance.

6. In general, what grade would you give the Hamilton ISD school board?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

7. What grade would you give the superintendent of Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

8. In general, what grade would you give the other district-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%

9. In general, what grade would you give the campus-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%

10. In general, what grade would you give the teachers in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Now please indicate if you **strongly agree, agree,** have **no opinion, disagree,** or **strongly disagree** with the following statements.

11. Learning and education are the main priorities in the Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

12. Central administration is top heavy.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%

13. Central administration does a good job of supporting the educational process at Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%

14. Central administration does what it can to ensure the necessary supplies and materials are made available to support instruction at Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

15. Central administration operations are cost effective and efficient.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

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Going back to the grading scale, **A, B, C, D** or **F**, please indicate how you would rate the following questions.

16. The school boards' knowledge of the educational needs of students in Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

17. The school boards' ability to establish effective district policies.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%

18. The superintendent's role as instructional leader of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

19. The superintendent's role as chief administrator (manager) of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

20. Your level of satisfaction with the spending priorities of the district.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

21. Current process for posting positions and hiring central administration personnel.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%

22. Current process for evaluating central administration personnel.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%

23. Administrative policy and procedure manuals within your department.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

24. Overall effectiveness of your department.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

25. District's use of technology for administrative purposes.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

26. District's use of technology as an instructional tool on campuses.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

27. District's relationships with various groups in the community (i.e., parents, businesses and civic groups).

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

For the next few questions please circle **Yes** or **No.**

28. Does Hamilton ISD fill vacancies and make promotions in staff/administrative positions based on individual qualifications?

Yes	No	No reply
100%	0%	0%

29. Does an effective line of communication exist between your central administration and schools?

No reply	Yes	No
0%	100%	0%

30. Do you have sufficient time for planning curriculum at your campus?

Yes	No	No reply
0%	50%	50%

31. Can you recommend a few ways to improve Hamilton ISD's operational efficiency? **Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

No answers provided by respondents.

Again, using the grading system, please grade the combined efficiency and effectiveness for each of the following district-wide services of Hamilton ISD:

32a. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

b. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

c. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

d. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

e. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

f. Food services

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

g. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

h. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

i. Management Information Services

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

j. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

k. Planning and Budgeting

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

l. Your overall grade for operations of Hamilton ISD

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Comptroller's office, you may call 1-800-232-8927.

Principal and Assistant Principal Survey

(Note: Data shown may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

The State Comptroller's office is conducting a Management and Performance Review of the Hamilton Independent School District. The three main objectives of the performance review are to enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, identify ways to improve management practices, and identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Input from school administrators is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like as many principals and assistant principals as possible to complete the survey instrument. Please complete and mail your survey in the postage paid envelope provided, no later than **March 5, 1998.**

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that school administrators in your district have accurate and unbiased input into the management and performance review process.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. Gender.

Male	Female
100%	0%

2. How long have you been employed by the Hamilton ISD?

No reply	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

3. Ethnicity

Anglo	No reply
50%	50%

4. Grades taught in your school (circle **all that apply**).

Pre K	K – 5th	6th – 8th	9th – 12th
0%	0%	50%	50%

5. Name of your school (Optional) _____

For the following questions use the grades **A, B, C, D or F** to indicate Hamilton ISD's performance.

6. In general, what grade would you give the Hamilton ISD school board?

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

7. What grade would you give the superintendent of Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%

8. In general, what grade would you give the other district-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F
0%	50%	50%	0%	0%

9. In general, what grade would you give the campus-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

10. In general, what grade would you give the teachers in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

Now please indicate if you **strongly agree, agree,** have **no opinion, disagree,** or **strongly disagree** with the following statements.

11. Learning and education are the main priorities in the Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

12. Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. Hamilton ISD schools are safe from crime and provide a secure learning environment.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. Schools effectively handle behavioral problems.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

15. The necessary supplies and materials are made available to support instruction in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

16. Students are motivated to learn in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

17. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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18. Teachers care about the educational needs of the students in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

19. Principals/assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

20. Parents, in general take responsibility for their children's behavior in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

21. Parents are satisfied with the education students receive in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

22. District operations are cost-effective and efficient.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

23. Site-based decision-management is implemented effectively in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Going back to the grading scale, **A, B, C, D** or **F**, please indicate how you would rate the following questions.

24. The school boards knowledge of the educational needs of students in Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

25. The school boards' ability to establish effective district policies.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

26. The superintendent's role as instructional leader of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

27. The superintendent's role as chief administrator (manager) of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	0%	50%	0%	0%

28. In general, what grade would you give principal's as instructional leaders in Hamilton ISD schools.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

29. In general, what grade would you give principals as manager of school staff and teachers in Hamilton ISD schools.

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

30. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

31. Amount of classroom time dedicated to TAAS preparation.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

32. Amount of classroom time dedicated to basic educational requirements, such as reading, math, science and history.

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

33. Parents' efforts in assisting with the education and learning process.

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

34. Parents participation in school activities/organizations.

A	B	C	D	F
50%	0%	50%	0%	0%

35. District's relationships with various groups in the community.

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

36. District's use of technology as in instructional tool on your campus.

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

37. District's use of technology for administrative purposes.

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

38. District's use of programs for bilingual students.

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

39. Conditions of Hamilton ISD facilities.

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

For the next few questions please circle **Yes** or **No.**

40. Does Hamilton ISD fill vacancies and make promotions in staff/administrative positions based on individual qualifications?

Yes	No
100%	0%

41. Does an effective line of communication exist between your central administration and schools?

Yes	No
100%	0%

42. Do you have sufficient time for planning curriculum at your campus?

Yes	No
50%	50%

43. In what one or two ways could the operational efficiency of Hamilton ISD be improved?

Answers included; more full-time clerical help on both campuses, and regularly scheduled administrative meetings.

Again, using the grading system, please grade the combined efficiency and effectiveness for each of the following districtwide services of Hamilton ISD:

44a. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F
100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

b. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

c. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

d. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

e. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

f. Food services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

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g. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

h. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

i. Management Information Services

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

j. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

k. Planning and Budgeting

A	B	C	D	F
50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

l. Your overall grade for operations of Hamilton ISD

A	B	C	D	F
0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Comptroller's office, you may call 1-800-232-8927.

Teacher Survey

(Note: Data shown may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

The State Comptroller's office is conducting a Management and Performance Review of the Hamilton Independent School District. The three main objectives of the performance review are to enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, identify ways to improve management practices, and identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Teacher input is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like as many teachers as possible to complete and return the survey instrument via the attached postage paid envelope no later than **March 5, 1998.**

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that school administrators in your district have accurate and unbiased input into the management and performance review process.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. Gender

Male	Female	No reply
5%	90%	5%

2. How long have you been a teacher in the Hamilton ISD?

No reply	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
10%	36%	21%	18%	5%	10%

3. Ethnicity

No reply	Anglo	African Amer.	Hispanic	Other
10%	87%	0%	0%	3%

4. Grades you have taught (circle **all that apply**).

Pre-K	K-5th	6th – 8th	9th – 12th
10%	51%	33%	36%

Totals are in excess of 100% due to teachers selecting multiple grade levels.

5. Name of your school (**Optional**)

For the following questions use the grades **A, B, C, D or F** to indicate Hamilton ISD's performance.

6. In general, what grade would you give the Hamilton ISD school board?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
33%	36%	15%	8%	5%	3%

7. What grade would you give the superintendent of Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
10%	26%	23%	26%	13%	3%

8. In general, what grade would you give the other district-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
10%	44%	28%	5%	8%	5%

9. In general, what grade would you give the campus-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
15%	38%	18%	18%	8%	3%

10. In general, what grade would you give the teachers in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
51%	38%	8%	3%	0%	0%

Now please indicate if you **strongly agree, agree,** have **no opinion, disagree,** or **strongly disagree** with the following statements.

11. Learning and education are the main priorities in the Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
33%	44%	3%	10%	5%	5%

12. Emphasis on learning has increased in the district in the past three years.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
38%	31%	5%	18%	5%	3%

13. Hamilton ISD schools are safe from crime and provide a secure learning environment.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
31%	59%	3%	5%	0%	3%

14. Schools effectively handle behavioral problems.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
21%	38%	5%	26%	8%	2%

15. The necessary supplies and materials are made available to support instruction in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
44%	49%	3%	3%	0%	1%

16. Students are motivated to learn in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
23%	62%	3%	10%	0%	2%

17. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
31%	59%	5%	3%	0%	2%

18. Teachers care about the educational needs of the students in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
38%	59%	0%	0%	0%	3%

19. Principals/assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
18%	44%	8%	28%	0%	2%

20. Parents, in general take responsibility for their children's behavior in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
3%	56%	8%	28%	3%	2%

21. Parents are satisfied with the education students receive in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
13%	72%	8%	5%	0%	2%

22. District operations are cost-effective and efficient.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
5%	46%	18%	26%	3%	2%

23. Site-based decision-management is implemented effectively in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
31%	38%	8%	18%	3%	2%

Going back to the grading scale, **A, B, C, D** or **F**, please indicate how you would rate the following questions.

24. The school boards' knowledge of the educational needs of students in Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
46%	18%	15%	15%	3%	3%

25. The school boards' ability to establish effective district policies.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
41%	33%	5%	15%	0%	5%

26. The superintendent's role as instructional leader of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
10%	13%	44%	21%	10%	3%

27. The superintendent's role as chief administrator (manager) of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
10%	23%	36%	18%	10%	3%

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28. Your principals work as instructional leader of your school.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
15%	44%	18%	10%	10%	3%

29. Your principal's work as manager of school staff and teachers.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
18%	36%	18%	15%	10%	3%

30. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	44%	23%	5%	0%	3%

31. Amount of classroom time dedicated to TAAS preparation.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
51%	33%	5%	0%	0%	11%

32. Amount of classroom time dedicated to basic educational requirements, such as reading, math, science and history.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
62%	33%	0%	0%	0%	5%

33. Parents' efforts in assisting with the education and learning process.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
51%	26%	15%	5%	0%	3%

34. Parent's participation in school activities/organizations.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
33%	54%	5%	3%	3%	3%

35. District's relationships with various groups in the community.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
49%	36%	10%	3%	0%	3%

36. District's use of technology as in instructional tool on your campus.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
85%	13%	0%	0%	0	3%

37. District's use of technology for administrative purposes.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
67%	23%	8%	0%	0%	3%

38. District's use of programs for bilingual students.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
38%	36%	21%	3%	0%	3%

39. Conditions of Hamilton ISD facilities.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	64%	3%	5%	0%	3%

For the next few questions please circle **Yes** or **No.**

40. Does Hamilton ISD fill vacancies and make promotions in staff/administrative positions based on individual qualifications?

Yes	No	No reply
59%	38%	3%

41. Does an effective line of communication exist between your central administration and schools?

Yes	No	No reply
46%	51%	3%

42. Do you have sufficient time for planning curriculum at your campus?

Yes	No	No reply
59%	38%	3%

43. In what one or two ways could the operational efficiency of Hamilton ISD be improved?

Needs consistency.	Good job.	Respected leadership.
New administration	We need leadership.	More time for planning.
More curriculum development Stronger decision maker	The E-mail helps tremendously.	Better communication Consistency
The Elem. Principal should strive to improve on his instructional leadership.	We need to change superintendent and high school principal	Need an attendance secretary Need more office help
Adhere to what the S-based committees feel is important and implement these ideas!	Central administration could be more timely in their communication.	With added programs such as HOST, add a facilitator.
Hire an assistant principal or Dean (Male) for discipline purposes. It would be nice if we were appreciated-some way!	There is a great need for another principal in both the Elem. And Jr. High and High School. Overworked.	Get honest administration We need another counselor Admin. needs to act, not say yes and not do anything.
2 principals , PK-8 Better communication top-down. More time for curriculum planning	Use more inclusion. Less dumping kinds into resource. Use 504 to help kids earlier in their educational needs.	The superintendent can get his act together and make good decisions for the district. A new principal could be hired for Jr. High.
Operational efficiency would improve if employees were made to feel their years of hard work, their hours of dedication, and their positive contribution was appreciated.	Curriculum needs aligning with administration demanding things be done correctly. We all work hard, but do what we want in our classroom. No coordination between grades.	Increase communication among teachers and campus admin. Less politics. Improved attitudes on everyone's part, boosting morale of teachers.

43. In what one or two ways could the operational efficiency of Hamilton ISD be improved? (continued)

Get a HS Principal who can really do the job. Hire a PIEMS coordinator and release both H.S. and Elem. Secretaries to do their work. Curriculum director/test coordinator, relieve the counselor.	It would be nice to have an Elem. Principal that listens and tries to help in important situations. I am glad that Hamilton has a superintendent that is willing to listen and act.
High school office needs more secretarial help. One secretary to handle PIEMS, attendance, and phones is not enough. Counselor has no secretarial help and cannot help students due to paperwork.	Install two-way communication in all classrooms. Install phone for teacher -parent conferences within easy distance of Jr. High hall.

Again, using the grading system, please grade the combined efficiency and effectiveness for each of the following districtwide services of Hamilton ISD:

44a. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
56%	38%	3%	0%	0%	3%

b. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
46%	31%	13%	8%	0%	3%

c. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
21%	28%	31%	15%	3%	3%

d. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
51%	41%	5%	0%	0%	3%

e. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
31%	41%	18%	5%	0%	5%

f. Food services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
18%	49%	15%	10%	5%	3%

g. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
31%	36%	13%	13%	3%	5%

h. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
33%	38%	10%	10%	5%	3%

i. Management Information Services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	41%	18%	13%	0%	3%

j. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
28%	49%	13%	5%	3%	3%

k. Planning and Budgeting

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
28%	44%	18%	3%	3%	5%

l. Your overall grade for operations of Hamilton ISD

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	49%	18%	5%	0%	3%

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Comptroller's office, you may call 1-800-232-8927.

Employee Survey

(Note: Data shown may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

The State Comptroller's office is conducting a Management and Performance Review of the Hamilton Independent School District. The three main objectives of the performance review are to enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, identify ways to improve management practices, and identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Employee input is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like as many employees as possible to complete and return the survey instrument via the attached postage paid envelope no later than **March 5, 1998**.

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that school administrators in your district have accurate and unbiased input into the management and performance review process.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

<u>Demographic Data</u>

1. Gender.

Male	Female	No reply
4%	90%	6%

2. How long have you been employed by the Hamilton ISD?

No reply	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
8%	31%	24%	18%	10%	8%

3. Are you classified as a?

Teacher	Other	Principal	No reply
61%	27%	2%	10%

4. Are you...

No reply	Anglo	African Amer.	Hispanic	Other
8%	86%	0%	0%	6%

5. What is the name of your school or area? (Optional)

Elementary	High School	Special Ed. Coop	No reply
18%	18%	10%	53%

6. What grades are taught at your school?

Pre-K **K-5th** **5th-6th 7th-8th 9th-12th**
Alternative Campus **Not Applicable**

7. Using a scale of **A** through **F**, with **A** being the best, how would you grade the effectiveness of site-based decision-making on your campus?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
20%	31%	29%	8%	0%	6%	6%

Why?

A; very effective	A; members are elected, parents and community members are included, we do not let administration run the committee.	B; Positions are taken seriously and persons serving are receptive to hearing and considering the in-put of others.	C; We are not included (no representative) from our office. We have little or no input opportunities.
A; Not elaborated	B; Not elaborated	B; I think site-based is used for too many decisions that should be administrative.	C; Recommendations are not always followed by administration.
A; They discuss everything	B; I feel that needs are addressed and people are heard.	B; I know this committee puts in a lot of time and is appreciated. I have heard comments from members that sometimes they feel that little progress is made. They seem to be doing a good job.	C; Many issues are grievances and not student related. Power Hungry.
A; They are interested and see it is followed through	B; Positive changes cone about as a result of suggestions handled.	B; The members try to do good job representing staff. Generally they come up with good decisions. Several times ideas are not used due to principal in-put. It generally follows all its rules and informs staff.	C; Site-based decisions not carried to school board and not implemented.
A; The faculty staff's in-put is considered with respect and careful consideration. We are an integral part of the decision making process.	B; The committees discussions and decisions are not always followed through on by the administration.	B; problems & Questions turned in to SB are addressed quickly if possible.	C; We do not have representation and should have. We are affected by some of their decisions, receive their typed minutes of meetings, but have no input.
A; Our committee has a strong voice and the school board is interested in what is said there.	B; Would be better if committees decisions were followed through by administration.	C; Administration prefers to make the decisions themselves rather than give authority to site-base.	C; Committees meet but the administration does not tend to look at the recommendations. Often it is just hours of time "wasted" because somehow those decisions have no authority.

7. Using a scale of **A** through **F**, with **A** being the best, how would you grade the effectiveness of site-based decision-making on your campus? (continued)

A; Members: sincere, active. Goal: student performance. Community oriented: school board informed.	B; Site based decision making teams carefully considers issues, but they are not always carried out effectively by administration.	C; Sometimes teachers ideas are listened to; other time not. Administrative support not always there.	C; It needs work in certain areas, communication is one.
C; Not always enforced	D; There is no or little input for the support staff.	D; because administration end up deciding things	Don't know; We have no representation
C; Site-based committees are allowed just enough room to know about situations and to discuss them and then to find that administration and board have made some decision.	D; Often what we are told on Wednesday afternoon is not what happens on Monday at the Board Meeting.	D; A block exist between site base and board - if superintendent doesn't want something taken to the board - it doesn't go.	Don't know; I have not had training in site-based decision making and don't really know the definition.

8. How would you grade the effectiveness of site-based decision-making districtwide?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
20%	27%	27%	6%	2%	14%	4%

Why?

A; Decision are discussed and solved.	B; Positions are taken seriously and persons serving are receptive to hearing and considering the in-put of others.	B; When reading site base decisions, it often sounds like decisions are made on the basis of points of view of those with the strongest will or the loudest voice and not necessarily made with the needs of all students in mind. Some outcomes have been excellent.	C; Not always enforced
A; The community has become more responsible for the education of "their" children and hears the concerns of the professionals overseeing "their" education and guiding "their" children into the future as role models.	B; I think site based is used for too many decisions that should be administrative. Too many "nit-picky" decisions are made by site-based. High school and District site-base tries to make too many decisions for Elementary.	B; many times the separate campuses try to offer input. Generally it is accepted but sometimes the separate campuses take offense to what the other campuses suggests. Needs to be a better team attitude among admin. And teaching staff from both campuses.	C; Same as previous. Also, people who have served over and over are getting tired and many professional persons are not willing to spend the time to work the hours required.

8. How would you grade the effectiveness of site-based decision-making districtwide? (continued)

A; members are elected, parents and community members are included, we do not let administration run the committee. All levels are able to give input.	B; I know this committee puts in a lot of time and is appreciated. I have heard comments from members that sometimes they feel that little progress is made. They seem to be doing a good job.	C; rarely the SB Committee allowed to have a final decision on any area, even the areas mandated as ours by law.	C; Grievances.
D; Not elaborated	D; A block exist between site base and board - if superintendent doesn't want something taken to the board - it doesn't go.	Don't know; I have not had training in site-based decision making and don't really know the definition.	F; Administration doesn't follow through and lies to site-base. Example: Nadine Tiemann being hired.
D; They aren't allowed to follow through by administration.	Don't know.		

9. How would you grade the district's use of compensatory education funds for at-risk students?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
16%	16%	6%	6%	6%	49%	0%

10. How would you grade the district's use of Title I funds for economically disadvantaged students?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
24%	18%	10%	0%	2%	43%	2%

11. How would you grade the district's Gifted and Talented Education program?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
49%	27%	8%	10%	2%	2%	2%

12. How would you grade the district's Career and Technology Education program?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
43%	18%	6%	6%	2%	22%	2%

13. How would you grade the district's Adult Education program?

A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	No reply
12%	14%	6%	0%	4%	59%	4%

Now, tell us whether you **strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree,** have **no opinion** or simply **don't know** about the following statements.

14. The district provides adequate training in instructional technology.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	Don't know	No reply
41%	43%	4%	0%	4%	6%	2%

15. The district's school counselors receive sufficient training.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	Don't know	No reply
18%	29%	14%	8%	2%	24%	4%

16. The district provides a sufficient number of counselors for my campus.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	Don't know	No reply
10%	29%	6%	37%	10%	6%	2%

17. I receive adequate instructional leadership and support.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	Don't know	No reply
10%	31%	8%	37%	12%	0%	2%

18. Who is responsible for providing instructional leadership on your campus?

Principal	Coordinator	Dept. Chair	Other	Not App.	No reply
84%	0%	0%	12%	0%	4%

19. Now, using the **A** through **F** grading scale, how would you grade the district's health insurance plan?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
27%	31%	22%	6%	8%	6%

20. What, if any, problems have you encountered with the health insurance plan?

We have to pay for it.	School should pay insurance	Not answered	I'm not on it. I wish the school would pay more per employee.
Too new to have problems.	Rx - Co. not wanting to pay.	No choice of competent doctors in town. Only 1 choice.	I would like to use our hometown pharmacy for all prescriptions
Too expensive	Plan was changed after a year of allowing us to invest our money ($6.70) We lost it. The school told us "It wasn't your money anyway."	Lack of use (in past) not competitive, inconvenience - prescriptions.	I haven't encountered any, but it's too high.
There is only one doctor in Hamilton you can see on the plan.	Not enough of our monthly fee is paid for by the school district or state.	It changes so much I'm on my spouses for consistency.	I feel our insurance should by paid in full by school
The new one is great.	Not enough Dr.'s in program nearby.	Inconvenience of service providers (Lack of in my immediate area)	I do not use the health plan offered.
The $1,000 limit on drugs for the year.	Not being able to use doctors that we have used for ten or more years for a serious health problem.	In the past it was horrible. This year we have excellent insurance.	Do not have health insurance through school.
Do not participate	Finally after18 years we have a good plan, well better than what we used to have.	Difficulty to get prescriptions filled.	Billing is to complicated for successful use.
Do not use.	Group Insurance is not a possibility for me at this time. It is cheaper to go outside the school district.	Busy phone line for pharmacy at Scott S. White	

21. What does the plan **not** offer that you feel it should? Frequent answers included: more choice of doctors, better dental.

The school should pay for more of our plan.	Payment of our policies.	It offers everything.	More selection.
Should be able to use any doctor available.	My own choice of specialist.	I have yet had to use much of it yet.	Do not use.
Same as previous	More dental - orthodontist	I am happy except for the prescriptions	Dental should be included
Payment for state employees.	More comprehensive dental coverage	Haven't had it long enough to know.	Do not participate
Lower rates	Full payment	I feel like we've got the best plan in my years here.	Payment by State, the employee pays $468.00 for family coverage.
Choice of physician for special needs i.e. dermatologists, podiatrists, instead of referral by primary physician.	Not being able to use doctors that we have used for ten or more years for a serious health problem.	Freedom to refill without having to go through Scott White each time. Select our own doctor. A more reasonable rate for teachers.	

22. Please list three staff development in-services offered by HISD that you have participated in within the last two years. Using the A through F grading scale, please grade each of the training courses.

1. A B C D F

2. A B C D F

3. A B C D F

Up date on Laws; A	Do not attend.	Do not go	GT Training; F
GT Training; A	GT; F AR; F	Mary Tyler; A Inclusion; A	Technology; A Gifted & Talented; B
Technology - taught it, so unfair to answer	Gifted/Talented; C Technology; A	G/T; C Technology; C	G/T Training; B Technology Training; A
GT; A Technology; A Special Ed.; A	Gifted and Talented; A Technology; B	Gifted/Talented (meeting the needs of exceptional learners); F	GT Training; B Technology Training; A Motivational; C
Technology; A Gifted - Talented; C At Risk; C	G/T Training; B Technology Training; A Inclusion; A	Gifted & Talented; A Computer; A AR; A	G.T. ; A Curriculum; A TAAS; A
Technology; A Gifted & Talented; A Right Choice; A	Gifted and Talented; B Technology Training; A PDAS; C	Gifted & Talented; A Right Choice; A 4-mat; A	Format; A GT Identification; B
Technology; A Gifted & Talented; C Motivational; A	GT Training; B Technology Training; A 4Mat Training; C	Technology; B Non-violent Crisis Intervention; A Gifted/Talented; C	Technology Training; A G/T Training; B Format Training; A
Technology Training; A Gifted and Talented; C Curriculum Planning; C	Grant 2000 (computer tech); A AR; D Gifted and Talented; B	Gifted & Talented (30 hrs); B Technology; B Reading; B	Computer; A Gifted & Talented; B Behavioral Problems; A
Gifted & Talented; B Curriculum Planning and Coordination; B Computer Skills-Internet, Word processing, etc.; A	Gifted/Talented Nature and Needs of Gifted; C Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted; C Instructional Strategies; C	Accelerated Reading; B Gifted/talented Education Staff Development; B Format; not rated	Gifted/Talented; B Technology(good; informative; some instruction weak); B PDAS (weak instruction/ information); D
Special Ed. In-service 97; A Special Ed. In-Service 96; B	Gifted/Talented; C Gifted/Talented; C Gifted/Talented; C	G/T; B Technology; B E-mail (Technology); B	30 hrs GT Training; A Technology Training; A
Not asked to attend any training except secretary conference.	G/T; A SOI; A Technology; A	4-mat Training; A Gifted/Talented Training; B Computer Training; A	

23. What do you feel could be done to improve staff development in HISD?

Don't know	More variety	Offer things that apply to us.	Make them subject-oriented.
Too much applies only to lower grades K-6.	More of a variety of topics/subjects.	Let teachers decide on topics.	Administration needs to listen more staff
More motivational, morale-boosting development.	Divide by departments let each dept. have separate development.	More time for curriculum development	More specifically related to students needs.
More team teaching for slow learners and inclusion	Hire good consultants - actually implement theories.	More computer training for all staff not just Elem.	More training in reading and math instruction.
To be included in decision making process on campus or a rep	No more whole staff grouping (High School - Elem.) Make it more individualized like the technology training.	Go outside of the district for presenters of the information.	Let teachers pick their own staff development that they can attend during the school year.
This could have been improved by breaking the training up by Elem., Jr. High, and High	Variety; Don't have someone from any place but home campus. Separate Elem. and Secondary.	Gear in-service toward what staff feel are deficiencies, not administration choices.	Let DSB decide/with teachers in-put...rather than the administrators decide.
Regular Ed. Teachers should be trained in understanding students with learning disabilities.	Need technology training for staff grades 5 -12, have received little to none, goals 2000 grant trained Pre-K - 4th. T.F. Grant will train 5 - 12 this summer.	We need to divide into grade levels and have subjects pertaining to our grade level not elem., junior high and high school all together.	Gifted / talented in-service would be more beneficial if the elementary and high school campuses were separated, so information would be age appropriate.
Regular Ed. Needs to know more about how to deal with Special Ed. Students in their regular Ed. Classrooms.	Keep it strongly related to areas of need at the High School level, "generic" will not work.	Break down smaller groups and target individual areas.	Break staff development by campus / grade level so that it would be more applicable to what's appropriate.

24. Where do you receive the majority of your ongoing training as a District employee?

HISD Staff Dev.	Region Svc. Center	Other	No reply
61%	8%	17%	14%

25. Do you receive the necessary budget, accounting and financial information you need to effectively manage your campus or department?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
18%	35%	16%	12%	12%	6%

That concludes our formal survey, if there is anything that you would like to add that may not have been covered in this survey, use the space provided below. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Student Survey

(Note: Data shown may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. Gender.

Male	Female	No reply
27%	72%	1%

2. What is your classification?

Junior	Senior
35%	65%

3. What is your ethnic background?

No reply	Anglo	African Amer.	Hispanic	Other
2%	86%	0%	2%	10%

The following statements indicate my *general* feelings.

For the following questions use the grades **A, B, C, D** or **F** to indicate Hamilton ISD's performance.

1. How would you grade your school for the quality of education you are receiving?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
32%	53%	11%	0%	2%	2%

2. In general, what grade would you give your teachers overall?

A	B	C	D	F
11%	76%	8%	5%	0%

3. How safe do you feel in your school?

Very Safe	Fairly Safe	Very Unsafe
66%	29%	5%

4. How often do principals visit your classroom?

Very Often	Fairly Often	Once in a While	Never
39%	29%	29%	3%

5. How often do assistant principals visit your classroom?

Hamilton ISD does not have any assistant principals.

6. How often do principals attend school activities?

Very Often	Fairly Often	Once in a While	Never
45%	47%	5%	3%

7. How often do assistant principals attend school activities?

Hamilton ISD does not have any assistant principals.

Now please indicate if you **strongly agree, agree,** have **no opinion, disagree**, or **strongly disagree** with the following statements.

8. Do you agree that learning is your school's most important goal?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
8%	50%	8%	21%	13%

9. Does your school offer a broad selection of challenging courses?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
8%	45%	32%	13%	3%

10. Does your school's library have enough books and resources for you to use?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
8%	50%	5%	29%	8%

11. Do you think teachers expect students to do their very best work?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
16%	50%	18%	13%	3%

12. Do teachers explain materials and assignments to you so that you can understand them clearly?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
0%	47%	24%	18%	11%

13. Do you feel that teachers care about students' needs?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
3%	45%	37%	13%	3%

14. Do teachers give you individual attention?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
5%	63%	18%	13%	0%

15. Do teachers praise you when you are doing well in your school work?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
3%	50%	24%	16%	8%

16. Do you think the school principal cares about the students' needs?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
3%	37%	42%	16%	3%

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17. Do principals treat students with respect?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
3%	39%	42%	13%	3%

18. Do assistant principals treat students with respect?

Hamilton ISD does not have any assistant principals.

19. Does the principal praise students for earning good grades?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
13%	34%	29%	21%	3%

20. Are you and your fellow students proud of your school?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
3%	55%	29%	5%	8%

21. Do you think that most students try to do their best in class?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
0%	24%	32%	39%	5%

22. Do you think that student misbehavior interferes with classroom learning?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
5%	42%	24%	24%	5%

23. Do you have sufficient books, lab supplies, and classroom materials?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
3%	63%	21%	13%	0%

24. Do school counselors provide career and college counseling opportunities?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.
14%	43%	24%	14%	5%

25. What do you think is the main reason that some students drop out of school at your campus?

They don't care about school.	Stupidity	D-hall, teachers
They are failing; not going to graduate.	[Teachers] smart mouth. [Principal] Teachers' attitudes.	Teachers who are biased against your name, race, and reputation away from school.
Because they don't care about their lives and their dreams are to work at Servco.	Too lazy for school work, don't realize (don't want to realize) the importance of education.	They are the people who don't care about anything. They may think they don't fit in.
Lack of incentives to stay in school.	They don't agree with the rules and employees at the school	Because they don't get along with the teachers and administration.
They want to work & teachers aren't fair to them	Teachers are on their backs about something. Principal	People will always drop out of school, it is human nature.
Just tired of school and sick of the teachers.	Drinking	They don't have motivation from home.
Boredom	Pregnant or failing	They hate school.
The students who drop out are usually just apathetic about most aspects of everything.	Students drop out of high school to get a job and make money or they are pregnant.	Our school has very bad facilities.
Drugs and lack of parental support	They don't have the grades.	

26. What can be done to ensure that students stay in school? For example, would some type of program or counseling help?

A better counseling person and another work program	Separate counselors, one for college and one specifically here to help students.	I don't think anything can be done, those students will do what they want to do.
Fun stuff	Better teachers	Better lunches
Fire [teacher] No D-hall	Teachers are equal to everyone. I'm not sure.	Better facilities
Nothing, if they're stupid enough to drop out, there is nothing you can do to stop it from happening.	A counselor that has time for the students.	We've tried these programs. People are going to do what they want.
Possibly teachers care more and then students would care more, offering more than academics and athletics.	School officials should try harder to reach the needs of students	Continual positive re-enforcement and personal attention in the classroom. Kids need someone who cares about them.
Make school interesting and modern; change styles frequently.	Fun learning most of the boys that drop out this year there is no hope for them.	Fire band; [teacher] and principal
The school can only do so much, the encouragement should start in the home.	Maybe someone could talk to the people who's attendance starts to get bad.	A high school plan that would include mostly AG. class.
No, if they want to go they will go.		

27. What do you think is the main reason why some students do not attend school regularly?

Don't care enough about school.	They are lazy	Personal problems, drugs
Boring	The teachers	
The don't enjoy attending and if the day is pretty they like to watch the flowers grow.	They like sitting at home drinking beer and getting drunk better than going to school.	They don't want to and they aren't watched closely.
School does not keep our attention. School here means tons of homework but we continue to learn nothing because it is not fun. Teachers treat us juniors as tiny children and think we like baby games and its fun.	They don't finish homework so they skip that class and then come back to school sometimes they're tired and sleep late.	Tired from the night before, and the school is boring we do the same things all the time, teachers never make it fun.
School is not a fun or happy environment to be involved in.	They don't care about their future.	There is no extra pushing and support from home.
School isn't fun, and they may just have no motivation to get up and be here by 8:00.	They are run down and tired of it, or have other things that need to be tended to.	Because they do not agree with the system of Hamilton High School.
They have better things to do.		

28. What do you think needs to be done to ensure that students attend school more regularly?

Make school less of a prison – more enjoyable.	Make more fun things more benefits.	Teachers to stop nagging all the time.
Give them rewards.	Make them be able to get the grades.	Fire [teacher]
Do something big for attendance.	Having attendance awards, like $$$.	Better activities. Get teachers off their back.
Have someone go around to those homes. Grab the kid by his ear and smack that kid until they get to school.	Make teachers and other school officials have programs and learning techniques that are more exciting.	Teachers that care and explain the homework assignments and they don't give so much homework at a time.
Less D-halls; less OCS; less AEP; less ZAPS; more one on one from teachers	Make school interesting and modern, change styles frequently.	Make school somewhat enjoyable and not so military like.
Don't require Biology, Algebra, and other senseless classes. No point.	Again, the school can only do so much, the teachers are here to teach, not to raise children.	Continual positive re-enforcement and personal attention in the classroom. Kids need someone who cares about them.
There isn't much to do, except make the school a more positive and happier place.	Special incentive programs and not to worry about money and more about education.	Incentive - (of some sort) (e.g. exemptions) Right now, there is none except for 5 whole minutes extra for lunch. YIPEE!

29. Why do you think some students perform poorly on the TAAS test?

They don't test well.	Low I.Q.	Don't care about it.
The TAAS test is very long and somewhat difficult. Not everyone is book smart.	They may not be smart. Or they may think that the grade doesn't matter.	They're tired and just want to get it over with so they just breeze through it.
Because they don't pay attention.	Most of our class passed the TAAS test.	Because it harder than the things we learn in class.
Because we take so many tests they become all similar and boring, so we don't care about any of them.	Usually the people who do poorly don't care to further their education, and therefore they don't care.	They don't care. Kids become tired of taking all the tests that the state makes us take and it no longer becomes important. Besides, they can always take it over.
They blow it off completely.	Poor teaching.	

30. What would help improve students' scores on the TAAS test?

More practice, shorten the test.	Have a class before the test to help them do their best	Teachers teaching things that would be on the TAAS test.
I'm not going to comment on that because I don't think this test should determine whether or not we graduate.	Let them understand that you don't have to take the TASP test if you do well and colleges look at your TAAS.	They need to understand that they can't graduate unless they do pass the TAAS tests.
More concentration.	If they work a little harder.	Don't make it timed.
Emphasize that they be TASP exempt and save some money on TASP - or eliminate it all together. TASP is pointless for exit level students.	The remedial courses during tutorial time and continual practice.	Don't let it be so long and longer breaks between the tests.

31. What are your plans once you graduate from high school?

Go to College	Get a Job	Join Military	Other	No reply
88%	3%	3%	3%	3%

32. How has school prepared you to pursue your plans after graduation?

It offers challenging classes.	Given me a basis of education	It has not.
I've taken the classes to graduate.	It has helped me learn things I need to know to live.	It has given me a solid background.
It really has not. I have strong determination and when I set a goal I'm going to reach my goal no matter how much it takes me.	With the education I got school it made it easier for the test you need to take to get in to the military.	I have a good education here. I have taken AP courses to get out of some college courses. I have had help with applications for college and scholarships.
Don't know where I want to go and what I will major in.	Ummmmmm it gave me an education.	You have to go to school to go to college.
Some classes have a heavy work load, which is how college will be.	The counselor talks to us and gives us pamphlets to read about college.	I have been given great experience with challenging work.
Giving us college preparatory classes.	I have taken basic courses and advanced courses to prepare myself.	Yes, they have given me a good education and a lot of support for the future.

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33. Name **three** things you like best about your school (You may refer to the list below to help determine your answer).

Security. Classes. Principal	Work program	Open campus
School activities Teachers Sports	Mr. Ashby Physics	My music. Relaxed atmosphere
Vocational/work programs	Successes	Small school
Friends. Lunch. Band.	Friends are there Its where I live All I've known	Athletics Students. School activities
Football	Public support.	Counselors
School spirit	Small town	Golf
Vocational classes	Home-Ed. class	Safety
Band, social time, National Honor Society	Mrs. Anglin Mr. Edins	Technology. Break

34. Name **three** things you like least about your school (You may refer to the list below to help determine your answer).

Counselor, Sports, Administration	Classes, Administration, Principal, Security	Strict rules. Strict schedule.
Stupid rules	Stupid dress codes	Not enough class choices.
Tutorials The 90 min. classes D-hall in the morning	Rednecks Punks Sophomores	Inflexibility, overlooking certain violations (tobacco), and being too strict on others (dress code).
Classification New stupid rules Faculty members that think they have the right to put you or your family down. It's not the students fault if they can't have a perfect fantasy life like this faculty member.	The fact that the students can't go anywhere without an administrator re-inventing the Spanish Inquisition. The fact that the principal relies more on rules regarding absences instead of important matters. We can't go anywhere in our cars.	Principal - very inconsistent on punishments and things like dress code with certain students and certain days. Dress code - the shorts and skirts have to be worn down to your knees. Organization - Elem. /High School, our schedules conflict and have children and high school in the cafeteria at one time.
Can't take your car for open campus lunch.	Amount of time we have in class (hour and 1/2)	Need more one-on-one attention.
Some teachers Emphasis to play sports. Grading policy on semester tests.	People with a certain name get special treatment. Stupid rules.	Peoples attitude
Lack of administrational skills. Our school seems to focus on the small petty problems. Our administration needs to get their priorities in order.	Coaches-thinking they own the school and flirting with every girl, any grade. Irresponsible kids who don't realize getting in trouble, they get everybody in trouble.	The three things I dislike about our school is the administration (principal), an un-open campus, and the feeling that I go to school in a jail.

35. Based on what you know about your school, tell us one or two things you believe can be improved. (You may refer to the list below to help determine your answer).

Counselor School activities	Administration, how they run.	Pep-rallies
The attitude of the teachers may change. More selection in sports besides track, football, volleyball, and basketball.	The administrators need to lighten up and let us be teenagers instead of treating us like prisoners.	The administrators need to lighten up and let us be teenagers instead of treating us like prisoners.
New principal, new classes and teachers who care about their students and want to help.	Looks and freedom of kids. The gap between teachers student relations.	The environment
Get in more liberal teaching staff and give students more of a voice.	Mood and outlook of all administration, negativity.	Teachers (raise the pay and get good ones!) Counselor - get another one to help Mr. Gardner.
Consistency with students and rules, less politics, better food, more class rooms, and employees. Better custodians who clean and not sweep stuff under the rug and complain all of the time.	I think that the administration should quit worrying about the petty stuff, like did someone shave this morning. They need to focus on the big problems like drugs and alcohol, which are major problems.	The things I believe can be improved at our school is dress code and security. On both these issues I think if the school would lighten up, the morale at school would be a lot better.

Possible responses for questions 33 through 35

Administration/Principal
Classes/Academics
Counselors
Facility/Location
Open Campus
Organization
People
Pride/School spirit
School Activities
Security
Sports
Teachers
Vocational/Work programs

Parent Survey

(Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

The State Comptroller's office is conducting a Management and Performance Review of the Hamilton Independent School District. The three main objectives of the performance review are to enhance educational service delivery through better operating efficiency, identify ways to improve management practices, and identify opportunities for cost savings within district operations.

Input from parents is critical to the management review process; therefore, we would like you to complete the survey instrument and return it via the postage paid envelope provided no later than **March 5, 1998.**

No names are requested on the survey instrument, so your responses will be treated with strict confidence. There are no right or wrong answers; however, your honest responses will ensure that school administrators in your district have accurate and unbiased input into the management and performance review process.

Please circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the survey question asked. Provide a brief response to questions that require a narrative answer.

Demographic Data

1. Gender

Male	Female	No reply
21%	72%	7%

2. How long have you been a parent in Hamilton ISD?

No reply	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
5%	47%	28%	14%	3%	3%

3. Ethnicity

No reply	Anglo	African Amer.	Hispanic	Other
9%	76%	0%	5%	10%

4. Have you ever taught within the district:

Yes	No	No reply
10%	83%	7%

5. If so, what department within the district were you employed.

Admin. Services **Adult Education** **Special Ed. Pop.** **Federal Programs**

Personnel **Accounting** **Purchasing/MIS** **Food Service**

Transportation **Maintenance** **Other**

For the following questions use the grades **A, B, C, D or F** to indicate Hamilton ISD's performance.

6. In general, what grade would you give the Hamilton ISD school board?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	41%	16%	10%	0%	7%

7. What grade would you give the superintendent of Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	29%	21%	12%	5%	7%

8. In general, what grade would you give the other district-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
21%	36%	19%	14%	0%	10%

9. In general, what grade would you give the campus-level administration in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
21%	34%	24%	12%	9%	0%

10. In general, what grade would you give the teachers in Hamilton ISD?

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
45%	33%	14%	2%	0%	7%

Now please indicate if you **strongly agree, agree,** have **no opinion, disagree,** or **strongly disagree** with the following statements.

11. Learning and education are the main priorities in the Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
38%	45%	2%	12%	2%	2%

12. Central administration is top heavy.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
7%	26%	40%	21%	3%	3%

13. Central administration does a good job of supporting the educational process at Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
17%	43%	24%	12%	3%	0%

14. Central administration does what it can to ensure the necessary supplies and materials are made available to support instruction at Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
17%	55%	17%	7%	3%	0%

15. Central administration operations are cost effective and efficient.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
7%	29%	48%	9%	3%	3%

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Going back to the grading scale, **A, B, C, D** or **F**, please indicate how you would rate the following questions.

16. The school boards' knowledge of the educational needs of students in Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
31%	33%	22%	9%	5%	0%

17. The school boards' ability to establish effective district policies.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
29%	36%	12%	16%	7%	0%

18. The superintendent's role as instructional leader of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
31%	21%	24%	10%	9%	5%

19. The superintendent's role as chief administrator (manager) of Hamilton ISD.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
34%	22%	22%	12%	3%	5%

20. Your level of satisfaction with the spending priorities of the district.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
21%	40%	16%	14%	5%	5%

21. Current process for posting positions and hiring personnel.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
26%	24%	16%	14%	9%	12%

22. Current process for evaluating personnel.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
21%	34%	22%	7%	3%	12%

23. Administrative policy and procedure within the District.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
28%	31%	19%	5%	7%	10%

24. Overall effectiveness of the District.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
33%	41%	9%	5%	2%	10%

25. District's use of technology for administrative purposes.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
41%	34%	7%	2%	2%	14%

26. District's use of technology as an instructional tool on campuses.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
50%	29%	9%	2%	0%	10%

27. District's relationships with various groups in the community (i.e., parents, businesses and civic groups).

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
31%	40%	7%	9%	4%	9%

For the next few questions please circle **Yes** or **No.**

28. Does Hamilton ISD fill vacancies and make promotions based on individual qualifications?

Yes	No	No reply
53%	36%	10%

29. Does an effective line of communication exist between parents and your central administration and schools?

Yes	No	No reply
57%	34%	9%

30. Do you have sufficient time for interaction with the schools?

Yes	No	No reply
66%	28%	7%

Now please indicate if you **strongly agree, agree,** have **no opinion, disagree,** or **strongly disagree** with the following statements.

31. Emphasis on learning his increased in the district in the past three years.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
19%	43%	22%	5%	2%	9%

32. Hamilton ISD schools are safe from crime and provide a secure learning environment.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
19%	55%	7%	10%	3%	5%

33. Schools effectively handle behavioral problems.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
16%	40%	9%	21%	10%	5%

34. Students are motivated to learn in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
22%	57%	3%	12%	1%	5%

35. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
24%	50%	10%	10%	0%	5%

36. Teachers care about the educational needs of the students in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
28%	55%	9%	2%	3%	3%

37. Principals/assistant principals actively work to meet students' needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
19%	55%	7%	14%	2%	3%

38. Parents, in general take responsibility for their children's behavior in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
12%	53%	12%	19%	2%	2%

39. Parents are satisfied with the education students receive in Hamilton ISD.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strong. Disag.	No reply
21%	55%	10%	10%	0%	3%

Going back to the grading scale, **A, B, C, D** or **F**, please indicate how you would rate the following questions.

40. Your principal's work as instructional leader of your school.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
31%	33%	12%	5%	3%	16%

41. Your principal's work as manager of school staff and teachers.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
36%	29%	10%	3%	5%	16%

42. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
40%	24%	19%	5%	2%	10%

43. Amount of classroom time dedicated to TAAS preparation.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
40%	31%	9%	2%	3%	16%

44. Amount of classroom time dedicated to basic educational requirements, such as reading, math, science and history.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
45%	29%	10%	3%	2%	10%

45. Parents' efforts in assisting with the education and learning process.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
22%	43%	19%	2%	2%	12%

46. Parent's participation in school activities/organizations.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
45%	33%	12%	0%	10%	0%

47. District's use of programs for bilingual students.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
34%	29%	16%	3%	5%	12%

48. Conditions of Hamilton ISD facilities.

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
40%	33%	9%	5%	2%	12%

49. Can you recommend a few ways to improve Hamilton ISD's operational efficiency?

Administration needs to know more about what is actually going on campus. Need ways to control unauthorized coming and going from campus. Also, when there is a problem, solve it. Don't just hope it will go away or be forgotten about. Too much sitting on the fence worried they'll offend someone, ACT!	By being more understanding toward kids and treating everyone the same. There is a lot of racism in our school system and a lot depends on who you are.
Boost teacher morale in H.S. Make business manager cooperative; less confrontational. Improve communication among H.S. staff. Have all staff work toward a common goal; establish a "unified" faculty. Coaches are treated one way; older coaches another; and good OLE boys" another; academic faculty brings up the rear. Stop politics in system, stop playing "games" of power.	Less emphasis on athletics, especially in budgeting and hiring decisions. More openness, i.e., accessibility and honesty by superintendent and business manager regarding budgetary and hiring decisions.
Get a new principal for Jr. High and grade school, nurse and a few teachers. It's like any other school in America, if you have the money, you have the right to do and say anything you like.	My children have been in 3 other schools. Hamilton has been one of the best. We have some great teachers that really work with the students and teachers.
Hamilton teachers and principals are more worried about grades than watching students. The school is full of drugs users and alcohol abusers. Half of all students smoke on campus. The teachers and management don't pay attention to the kids.	Very simple! New facilities! Expansion in the areas of learning such as library, computer labs, science labs, and emphasis on harder stricter math curriculum. Get rid of the Saxon Math altogether. Saxon math is not a challenge to the students. There must a grading system on each teacher every semester based on merit and not on personality or popularity. This is not a major concern at this school.
I hope you realize that most parents, including myself, don't really have any ideas (or knowledge) of many of the topics and questions. (Such as how the principal and staff and teachers work together, things about staff development and purchasing, etc.	I think that teachers' (some) attitudes need to be a little better toward the children. I don't like when my child comes home and all he/she has to say is [the teacher] sure was grippie today and this happens at least 2 days out of a week. I don't think this provides a real good learning environment.
I think childhood development and Pre-K need to be separated so that Pre-K students can be taught on the level that they are and not a lesser level.	When I was a parent of a new student I wanted to be involved in the school and support it in the PTO. My first meeting, I was cold shouldered and treated as an outsider.

49. Can you recommend a few ways to improve Hamilton ISD's operational efficiency? (continued)

More student monitoring in High School. Mentor program for inexperienced teachers. More counseling for all students.	The elementary office is run efficiently and smoothly. The High School is not. We need a firm energetic and enthusiastic superintendent who is actively involved with staff and students and who is will to make a stand on issues. Hire true math, science, and Spanish teachers, not coaches who need to fill time slots. Hire real softball and basketball coaches, not left over football coaches. Focus on UIL competition, academics, a top shelf science lab and Spanish lab and top notch teachers and majors in the field.
More supervision in shop classes and when children are let out for the day. Apply more licks instead of OCS and ZAP. More supervision during PE. Teach the kids to be more respectful to their fellow classmates.	Have a close monitoring of daily affairs of the Hamilton ISD.
Overall our staff does an excellent job and the trustees are conscientious in spending taxpayer's money.	The district spends too much money on land acquisition. The district spends too much money on sports and coaching staff instead of academics. Expenditures exceed revenues by $300,000. The school board feels their hands are tied on many important issues because administration has informed them their role is to hire the superintendent and allow him to run the district. Spouses of teachers are allowed to serve on the school board.
Parents should be encouraged to participate in their children's education actively through volunteer programs and other active means during school hours. Parents are not welcomed in class rooms at any time other than class parties. A clear discipline should be implemented and consistently carried out with equality for all students. Academic an athletic inequities should be leveled out. (Athletics are highly emphasized at this time.)	More time with some of the students. They need some more discipline and (close campus to those who can't behave right.)
School administrator, principal and teaching staff is too politically prejudiced, sexist, discriminatory. This district really needs to be investigated. Any law enforcement that needs to be called in are members of the KKK.	Spent too much money on houses bought to build new schools. Paying $100,000 for 2 frame house that the owner still gets to keep is a crock.
School principal to political.	Stop favoritism for certain students in regard to income, etc.

49. Can you recommend a few ways to improve Hamilton ISD's operational efficiency? (continued)

The cafeteria food is horrible. The menu's are always the same. The manager is very rude and uncooperative. Why don't they change that up and cook that beef the government sends them. Something really needs to be done about the manager.	Teachers should realize that if a student isn't getting it, then its their job to find a way to present it so that the student does "get it". Not just, here it is, if you don't get it "tough."
This is our first year at Hamilton ISD. I have really been impressed with the attitude and help provided by the district. At this time I could not think of any ways to improve Hamilton ISD.	

Again, using the grading system, please grade the combined efficiency and effectiveness for each of the following districtwide services of Hamilton ISD:

50a. Instructional services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
48%	19%	19%	3%	0%	10%

b. Maintenance services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
45%	29%	10%	7%	0%	9%

c. Custodial services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
43%	31%	10%	7%	0%	9%

d. Transportation services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
48%	29%	10%	0%	3%	9%

e. Personnel services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
43%	36%	9%	0%	2%	10%

f. Food services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
29%	26%	19%	7%	10%	9%

g. Financial services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
36%	33%	14%	0%	5%	12%

h. Staff development

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
34%	41%	10%	3%	2%	9%

i. Management Information Services

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
24%	47%	14%	3%	2%	10%

j. Purchasing

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
34%	33%	14%	3%	5%	10%

k. Planning and Budgeting

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
33%	34%	17%	2%	3%	10%

l. Your overall grade for operations of Hamilton ISD

A	B	C	D	F	No reply
36%	36%	14%	3%	2%	9%

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have additional comments, and would like to provide more input directly to the Comptroller's office, you may call 1-800-232-8927.

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